

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL: THE ROLE OKLAHOMA  
CRAFT BREWERIES PLAY IN COMMUNITIES

By

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CRAFT BREWERIES PLAY IN COMMUNITIES

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The craft brewery scene in Oklahoma is quickly expanding. This nascent industry is creating an economic impact in both local and the state economies, but it also serves social purposes because craft breweries are locations where communities interact and engage. To better understand the brand of Oklahoma craft breweries with their communities, this study sought to understand how breweries establish their brand with respect to the communities they are in, and how community stakeholders perceive the brand of craft breweries within their communities. The brands of craft breweries in Oklahoma were examined through two studies using semi-structured interviews with 11 brewery personnel and 11 community stakeholder participants. Branding showed up through local attachments, including neolocalism factors and place branding. Breweries should incorporate local ties in their branding to forge a sense of place, especially with the beers they distribute in gas stations and grocery stores. Oklahoma craft breweries are not marketing to the masses; they instead promote themselves through community engagements and events, which aids in community revival and the creation of sense of place. Word-of-mouth was attributed as the biggest factor of promotion. Moreover, this study demonstrated Oklahoma craft breweries exhibit third space characteristics. Third space locations are places where people are neither home or at work, and are locations where values and interests intersect to create a sense of identity and forge connections (Hickey, 2012). These characteristics include being a welcoming, local, inclusive location where people gather. Oklahoma craft breweries help create a quality of life aspect in their communities by being a venue where connections are made. This demonstrates Oklahoma craft breweries are venues where social capital is created. Social capital is present through the partnerships Oklahoma breweries have with other local business, their communities, and other craft breweries. Craft breweries and city leaders should recognize the difference craft breweries can make within communities through partnerships and being a third space location.

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## CHAPTER I

### **Background & Setting**

Craft breweries and craft brewers are defined by the Brewers Association as “small, independent, and traditional” (2020, para. 1). To be considered a craft brewery, less than 25% of the brewery can be owned or controlled by an alcoholic beverage industry member that is not a craft brewer (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). Craft brewers are considered to be traditional due to using historic beer styles with their own unique twists to create an innovated beer (Brewers Association, 2020). A majority of craft brewers originate their flavor from both traditional and innovative brewing ingredients and their fermentation (Fletcher, 2016). The unique character of craft beer and the demand for product differentiation explains the popularity of craft beer, consumers growing preferences outside of macro breweries such as Anheuser-Busch, and the trend of neolocalism (Baginski & Bell, 2011). Neolocalism is a concept best described as the intentional attempt to obtain local attachment by residents and regional lore as a reaction to the breakdown in modern America’s traditional bonds to community and family (Shortridge, 1996). The number of craft breweries in Oklahoma operating per year has increased since 2011 (Brewer Association, 2019). In 2011, there were fewer than 10 craft breweries in Oklahoma. By 2016, Oklahoma was home to 17 craft breweries with more in preparation (Roach, 2016). In 2018, Oklahoma ranked 35th in the nation in breweries per capita, moving up from 47th in 2014 (Brewers, Association, 2019). Today, Oklahoma is home to more than 55 craft breweries with more in planning stages (Brewers Association, 2019). In just four years the number of craft



breweries in Oklahoma has more than tripled. Oklahoma's recent growth of craft breweries can be attributed to recent law changes.

When Oklahoma was granted statehood in 1907, it was considered a dry state and Oklahoma beer laws have remained relatively restrictive compared to other states (Roach, 2016). Before 2016, the last substantive changes regarding beer laws in Oklahoma had occurred in 1959 with the repeal of state prohibition, 26 years after nationwide prohibition ended, and in 1984 with the approval of liquor sold by a county option basis (Barker, 2018; Roach, 2016). In 2016, the Oklahoma electorate approved State Question 792 and Senate Bill 424, which led to the modernization of Oklahoma's alcohol laws (Barker, 2018). The passage Senate Bill 424 allowed breweries to sell beer over 3.2% alcohol by weight (ABW), or high-point beer on site; and the passage of State Question 792 allowed convenience stores and grocery stores to sell high-point beer (Morgan, 2018; Perry, 2016). This amendment also allowed Oklahoma liquor stores to sell refrigerated beer (Perry, 2016).

Historically stores in Oklahoma were restricted to selling beverages above 3.2% alcohol content by weight at room temperature (Holcomb et al., 2018). Before the passage of Senate Bill 424, breweries could only sell beer at 3.2% ABW at the brewery; they were allowed to offer 12 ounces of samples of their full-strength beer, beer that is over 3.2% ABW, per person each day, but they could not sell their full-strength beer (Morgan, 2018). This bill allowed Oklahoma breweries to sell full-strength beer directly to customers and motivated breweries to open on-premise taprooms (Holcomb et al., 2018). The Craft Brewers Association of Oklahoma members predicted the number of craft breweries in Oklahoma to double after the passage of this legislation (Damon, 2018).

The growth of craft breweries in Oklahoma reflects the general trends in the United States. The number of craft breweries in the United States has increased since the mid 1980s (Gatrell et al., 2018). In 2006 there were 1,370 reported craft breweries in the U.S., and by 2010 there were 1,625 breweries reported (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). This growth rate was over 18%

in five years, which is the highest growth rate in U.S. history prior to the prohibition era (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). By 2015 the U.S. had 4,225 reported breweries, which is more breweries in the United States than any other time in the country's history (Watson, 2015b). Of the breweries existing in 2015, 99% of the breweries were independent, meaning less than 25% of the craft brewery is owned or controlled by a non-craft brewer and small, meaning the annual production of the brewery is less than 3% of the U.S. annual sales (Watson, 2015b).

As a result of the growth, craft beers have received more attention in recent years (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018). More than 80% of adults of legal drinking age have a brewery to go to within 10 miles of their home (Watson, 2015a). Craft breweries are gaining a growing share of the American beer market while general beer sales in the United States has experienced a decline in sales by volume (Watson et al., 2020). From 2012 to 2017 the traditional beer market declined by 16% while the craft brewery industry grew at an annual rate of 13.6% (Holcomb et al., 2018). By 2018 overall beer volume sales were down another 1% however, the craft brewery sales continued to grow at a rate of 4% in volume (Watson et al., 2020). Since 2007, the craft brewery industry revenue has grown more than 300% (Holcomb et al., 2018).

The craft beer industry has outperformed the large breweries on percentage growth and margins since 2006 (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). It continues to grow as the creation of new beer and styles continues to influence new product and new business entries (Holcomb et al., 2018). The craft brewery industry accounts for more than \$27.6 billion or 24% of the \$114.2 billion U.S. beer market (Watson et al., 2019). In 2018 Oklahoma craft breweries made a \$646 million economic impact by producing 79,747 barrels of craft beer (Brewers Association, 2019).

One of main factors that cause craft breweries to stand out against large brewers like MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch is their focus on differentiation (Chew, 2016). Their differentiation stems from combining traditional styles with unique formulas and adding nontraditional ingredients to develop new styles (Brewers Association, 2019). A craft brewery entails being a business that encompass being small, independent, and traditional, which

embraces the ethos of the industry (Hede & Watne, 2013). According to Tremblay and Tremblay (2011) craft breweries have grown due to a localized response.

Craft breweries have seen an increase in demand in large part to changing tastes and preferences of buyers and the popularization of local, hand-crafted beer (Holcomb et al., 2018). Craft breweries tend to appeal to the type of customers who seek new tastes and experiences (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). The appeal from the success of the craft beer industry can be tied to the higher perceived economic value the consumers get and the experience of drinking craft beer (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). A large share of the growing demand for craft beer can be credited to the millennial cohort (Fromm, 2014). This generation has been credited as one of the largest consumer groups leading the movement towards more local and craft products (Reid et al., 2014).

This generation is expanding the market for craft breweries (Holcomb et al., 2018). Millennials are often described as self-expressive, confident, and open to trying new products and experiences (Pew Research Center, 2010). The millennial cohort is the largest cohort in American History with 75 million Americans born between 1980 and 1996 (Fry, 2020). Millennials prefer to spend money at companies that are socially responsible and have the opinion there is too much power and influence in the hands of a few large companies (Carter, 2016). Craft beer brands are “generally presented as entrepreneurial and creative” (Hede & Watne, 2013, para. 23). Craft breweries tend to be involved in product donations, volunteerism, corporate social responsibility programs, sponsorships, community events, and philanthropies (Brewers Association, 2019).

Craft breweries commitment to social responsibility and sustainability attract millennials (Sprengeler, 2016). Millennials prefer products that reflect their values and are more likely to listen to recommendations of friends or online reviews for purchase decisions (McCluskey & Shreay, 2011). Granese (2012) found millennial craft beer drinkers are five times more likely to be influenced by recommendations of friends and word-of-mouth advertising than traditional, 94% had tried a new beer within the last month, and 70% followed their favorite craft brewery

and brands on social media (Granese, 2012). Much of the appeal of craft beer comes from the public claims about traditional and authentic craft production (Carroll & Swaminathan, 2000). Craft breweries demonstrate these values, creativity, tradition, and social responsibility that draw in niche, community-based markets and resonates with millennials (Gatrell et al., 2018).

Branding is a common theme in the craft beer industry (Gatrell et al., 2018). A brand is a combination of management decisions and consumer reactions, which identifies a business, product, good, service, or ideas (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Craft breweries often use place branding, which can be divided into three main groups: local history, physical environment, and town or state names, in their branding technique (Schnell & Reese, 2014). Place branding is a branding trend that allows craft breweries to create sense of belonging within their communities and has increased the popularity of craft breweries (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2014).

Craft breweries use neolocalism to resurrect the feeling of community through building new connections and relationships with the places they are located (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014). Neolocalism is the conscious effort to create a sense of place based on attributes of the community (Holtkamp et al., 2016). Shortridge (1996) defined neolocalism as a deliberate attempt at creating a relationship with local ties.

## **Problem Statement**

Oklahoma has a relatively new craft brewery industry, which means there is little to no academic research on Oklahoma craft breweries regarding how they are branded, or how community stakeholders perceive their brand. Studies in other states have evaluated brewery branding by examining neolocalism in terms of beer names and brewery logos (Hede & Watne, 2013), including neolocalism being expressed through beer names, logos, artwork, and other graphics (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003). Craft breweries can also be explored as a venue where social capital is developed through the connections forged at their locations. Many social

problems are caused by the decline of social capital (Putnam, 1993). Assessing branding and neolocalism through observing community engagement and sustainability practices is needed (Reid et al., 2014). A comprehensive understanding of how brewery personnel and community stakeholders perceive breweries to establish their brand with respect to communities would be valuable (Hede & Watne, 2013).

### **Purpose & Research Questions**

The purpose of this two-manuscript study was to assess the role of Oklahoma craft breweries within their communities. The purpose of the first manuscript was to understand how breweries establish their brand with respect to the communities they are in. The following research questions guided the first manuscript:

- RQ1: How do breweries establish salience within the respective community?
- RQ2: How do brewery personnel differentiate the brewery and their products?
- RQ3: How do brewery personnel create, participate, and interact with community-based events representing the brewery?
- RQ4: How do the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and their respective community members?
- RQ5: How does the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments?

The purpose of the second manuscript was to understand how key community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities. The following research objectives guided the second manuscript:

- RQ1: How has the brewery affected the community?
- RQ2: How have community members reacted to the brewery?

- RQ3: How do community members believe brewery personnel engage and interact with the community?
- RQ4: What role do community members see the breweries having within their community?
- RQ5: What do community members perceive as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities?

## **Review of Literature**

### **Overview of Branding**

A common theme in the craft beer industry is branding (Gatrell et al., 2018). “A brand is a complex, interrelated system of management decisions and consumer reactions that identifies a product (goods, services, or ideas), builds awareness of it, and creates meaning for it” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 6). A brand can serve as a guarantee for the public and can reduce uncertainties consumers may have regarding a product (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

“The environment surrounding a marketing effort is as complex as the marketing program itself, with a network of forces that creates both opportunities and threats for the brand,” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 26). The environmental context is provided by the situations brands are created, purchased, distributed, purchased, and used within, (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). According to Franzen and Moriarty (2009) the product, the company, the company’s network of suppliers and distributors, and the customers are the four basic situational contexts that surround a brand. Franzen and Moriarty propose no brand can exist independently.

Brand saliency is used to study the “perception and cognition to indicate parts of a stimulus that stand out for some reason, such as visibility, importance, or relevance” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 348). A brand’s success can be correlated with its saliency (Ehrenberg et al., 1997). External saliency is the “presence of a brand in the surroundings of a consumer” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 349). “Internal saliency has to do with the relative accessibility of a brand

representation in memory” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 349). Internal saliency is created through three main sources: consumer usage and experiences, the perception of a brand in both the social and physical environment, and the conception of communication manifestations (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The strength of a brand can be correlated to its saliency. Saliency influences consumers’ choices and purchasing behaviors (Ehrenberg et al., 1997). Branding is a powerful tool that can influence consumers in multiple ways.

The goal of differentiation is to establish a branding concept that sets a brand apart from others (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The key to differentiation is achieving both points of difference to set a brand apart and parity (Keller, 1998; Webster & Keller, 2004). A brand needs parity to be considered or included with other products and brands (Iyer & Muncy, 2005). Businesses invest in branding because brand reputation and image forge differentiation (Mudambi, 2002). Craft breweries use differentiation to set themselves apart from macro breweries such as brewing different styles and varieties of beer (Tremblay & Tremblay, 2011). Social factors and cultural factors are part of the microenvironment and are very important to brand strategy development as well as consumers’ brand perceptions (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). “Since values are the core of culture, research on cultural values is particularly important to brands that seek to immerse themselves in an appropriate value system,” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 35). Behaviors can be branded in addition to goods and services (Evans, et al., 2002).

According to Fournier (1998) brands have personalities, reputations, and relationships with consumers. The quality of the brand relationship is related to the meaningful actions of the brand and the consumers mutual benefit in which the relationships are grounded (Fournier, 1998). Consumers emotionally attach to brands (Lee, et al., 2009), and they are a component of the consumer-brand relationship (Fournier, 1998). A brand is a metaphorical story, which connect consumers with something deep (Bedbury, 2002). Without building a relationship with the brand, the public may not regularly visit breweries. Gatrell et al. (2018) argue branding is even more important for local businesses that target niche markets, and craft breweries need to be rooted

within a place or region and should promote sustainability. “The importance of branding in this rapidly growing and highly segmented market cannot be understated” (Gatrell et al., 2018, p. 3).

Studies have been conducted to determine how local craft breweries can build brand attachment and loyalty through creating relationships with their consumers. Taylor et al. (2020) indicated brand loyalty was influenced by breweries’ connection to the local community, consumers’ desire for a unique product, and consumers’ satisfaction with their brewery experience. Studies suggest people develop attachments and relationships with brands through satisfaction and trust for the brand (Fournier, 1998).

### **Place branding.**

Place branding is the idea that regions, cities, and communities can be branded (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). Place is linked to local human-environment interactions and natural resources (Yool & Comrie, 2014). Place branding is anchored in history, culture, environment, and links people to places and is used to bridge the gap between sense of place and a product being offered (Govers & Go, 2016).

Place branding can be split into three main groups: local history, town or state names, and physical environment (Schnell & Reese, 2014). Schnell and Reese (2014) identified place branding as trend used by craft breweries to create a sense of belonging and community. The attempt to create a sense of place and utilizing place branding has increased the popularity of craft breweries (Flack, 1997).

According to Flack (1997), place attachment was an influential driver of the initial craft brewery growth in the 1980s, and craft breweries stand in for a city’s competitive “place-brand” (Weilar, 2000). “Place, or the derived concept of a sense of place, is critical to understand the growth of the craft beer sector” (Gatrell et al., 2018, p. 4). The sense of shared place or identity combined with sustainability helps breweries build a lasting brand (Gatrell et al., 2018). Khermouch (1997) suggests geographic themes can build a brand as well as define a market.



Wesson and Figueiredo (2001) found craft breweries that produce products with strong local ties and are geographically focused are more successful.

The conscious effort to create a sense of place based on attributes of their community is neolocalism (Holtkamp et al., 2016). Shortridge (1996) explained the neolocalism movement as a deliberate attempt at creating a relationship with local ties, reconnecting with places, and supporting local economies. Craft breweries are using neolocalism to actively attempt to resurrect the feeling of community through building relationships and new connections with the places they are located as well as a sense of place (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014).

“Neolocalism of microbreweries is an intriguing attempt to create a sense of place” (Flack, 1997, p. 49). Craft breweries often use the local history, landscape, and culture through the names of their beers, label design, logo, and even the name of the brewery (Taylor et al., 2020), which helps craft breweries ingrain themselves into the local community. Using the local history of a community, town, region, or state and including the local heritage through branding is one way local businesses foster a local identity (Taylor et al., 2020). Examples of place attachment, neolocalism, and place-brand would be the names of breweries as well as the names of the beers the breweries sell (Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014). Several breweries name their beers after folklore, local heroes and characters, local sports teams, lifestyles, wildlife, climatic events, and landmarks (Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014).

The neolocalism movement is driving the U.S. craft beer movement (Schnell & Reese, 2003). Locally produced beer appeals to the growing number of customers interested in local movement (Tremblay & Tremblay, 2011) and the idea of boasting local economies by spending money at the brewery or on local beer through distribution channels is appealing to consumers (Taylor et al., 2020). Schnell (2013) suggested the trend toward supporting the local economy and businesses is what makes neolocalism different than local ties of the past. People are “cultivating local ties by choice, not by necessity” (Schnell, 2013, p. 56).

## **Place and place making**

Places are “centers of human existence” and involve peoples’ experiences (Relph, 1976, p. 43). A space becomes a place when people get to know it better and associate value with it (Tuan, 1991). Place combines the following: location, which is where a place is; locale, which is the material setting such as the buildings, streets, and tangible aspects; and sense of place, which is the feelings and emotions a place brings to mind (Cresswell, 2009). “Place comes into existence when meaningful experience is attached to a particular location” (Fletcher, 2016, para. 2).

Place can be a material thing, and it can be something of the mind such as an association of memories and emotions (Hanna, 1996). Thrift et al. (1999) suggested place is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving and is never completed. Place is reshaped by new associations and interactions (Fletcher, 2016). Massey (1994) suggested place is a meeting place; it is “a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” (Massey, 1994, p. 154). Craft breweries create an opportunity for people to make connections because of the local nature of breweries and the community focus they have (Fletcher, 2016). They play a significant role in place making through place branding themes in their names and beer names; breweries have become an important site for place-making by reinforcing connections through their place branding (Fletcher, 2016).

A sense of place is a combination of visual, social, cultural, and environmental characteristics and qualities that make communities different from one another (Hummon, 1992). It makes people care about their physical surroundings and creates community attachments (Hummon, 1992). Sense of place helps explain the relationships between people and social environments (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). For a relationship to develop between consumers and a brand a connection must be made (Fournier, 1998). A sense of place makes people feel like they belong (Marcu, 2012). A sense of place is seen in many brand narratives of craft breweries (Hede & Watne, 2013).

Consuming craft beers forges a sense of place and a feeling of belonging (Debies-Carl, 2018). Consuming craft beer also means consumers are supporting local businesses and the local economy (Schnell, 2013). A sense of place is a tested approach to branding and helps foster a closeness with people around local products and local history (Schnell & Reese, 2003). It includes the concepts of place identity and place attachment (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), which can be strengthened through local ties (Tuan, 1991). Sense of place focuses on how people feel about places (Rantanen, 2003), and the relationship people have with places they live (Relph, 1976). It evokes feelings of belonging, and it “burrows into the heart of the symbolic place-consciousness” of residents (Flack, 1997, p. 49). Consumers can connect with places and products associated through sense of place (Hede & Watne, 2013).

Sense of place appears to be a branding strategy for craft breweries because of the local appeal, and it can help reinforce emotional attachments between consumers and brands (Hede & Watne, 2013). Craft breweries are “driving the trend as they create a unique local [sense of place] for consumers” (Hede & Watne, 2013 para. 20). Sense of place allows breweries and consumers to create a brand together and recreate brands continually (Hede & Watne, 2013). Little academic research on craft brewery branding and the role a craft brewery has in a community exists.

### **Third space concept**

Edward Soja (1998) proposed a way of thinking about and interpreting socially produced space. He explained home as the first place, school or work as the second place people interact physically and socially, and he defined the third space as where people go when they are not at work or home (Soja, 1998). He advocated using third space when planning urban environments and discussed Los Angeles as a “real and imagined place” (Soja, 1998). Soja described his method in another study as “postmodern geographical praxis” (Soja, 2010).

Both studies showed an awareness that people consciously and unconsciously develop and define a space when they create and occupy that space. Soja presented the fundamental assumption that place needs to be understood as an interaction between people and natural forms

in both studies. He explained culture creates space and once this is realized, people can be more intentional and conscious of the space they are creating. An example of the third place concept being built into a company's core identity is Starbucks, which has set out to be a different kind of company. Starbucks promotes as being a "third place" where the community can gather to share great coffee and create a deeper human connection (Starbucks Coffee Company, 2020).

Third spaces are hangout locations such as cafes, bookstores, hair salons, coffee shops, craft breweries, and other locations that "serve the community best to the extent that they are inclusive and local" (Oldenburg, 1999, p xviii). Oldenburg (1999) suggested these locations are the heart of communities and help unite neighborhoods. These locations help build and establish connections even out social stratification (Mifsud, 2018). Hickey (2012) described third spaces as follows:

The vaunted 'third space' isn't home and isn't work – its's more like the living room of society at large. It's a place where you are neither family nor co-worker, and yet it's a place where values, interests, gossip, complaints and inspiration of these two other spheres intersect. It's a place at least one step removed from the structures of work and home, more random, and yet familiar enough to breed a sense of identity and connection. It's a place of both possibility and comfort, where the unexpected and the mundane transcend and mingle. (para. 1).

Zappa and Occhiogrosso, (1999) suggested a country needs some kind of football team, nuclear weapons, and at the very least a beer. Getting together to drink a beer has played a role in connecting and building communities. A craft brewery provides a public place and a reason to want to live in a community (Mifsud, 2018).

The origins of human civilization can be traced to communities centered around beer and other forms of alcohol (Dietrich et al. 2012). Alcohol is linked to endorphin release, which plays an important role in social bonding in people (Machin & Dunbar, 2011). Moderate alcohol consumption, especially in relaxed social environments such as pubs and craft breweries,

increases psychological wellbeing and can promote large-scale close personal bonds through storytelling, laughter, singing, and dancing (Dunbar et al., 2016). Many studies have found friendship and community are major factors of health and wellbeing; craft breweries can provide a place for people to make social connections (Mifsud, 2018).

Beer is a more communal drink than other alcohol beverages because it has a lower alcohol content per ounce and can be drunk in moderation (Mifsud, 2018). Getting together for a drink at a local pub or craft brewery creates a sense of community (Mifsud, 2018). Smith and Marontate (2010) suggest craft breweries can positively contribute to the economic, physical and social wellbeing of citizens. They are an essential element for communities through creating a unique social value for communities and as a presence of a third space location (Mifsud, 2018).

### **Social Capital**

Bourdieu (1986) defines the concept of social capital as social relations that have the ability or can increase the ability of a person or organization to advance their interests. Social capital according to Putnam (1993) has three components: moral obligations and norms, such as reciprocity or mutual assistance; social values, such as trust; and social networks, like volunteer organizations. He suggested accumulated social capital created a region with a good economic system and political integration (Putnam, 1993). Similarly, Seligman (1997) described the “legitimation” of societies as rooted on the trust of authority: “The emphasis in modern societies on consensus is based on interconnected networks on trust among citizens, families, voluntary organizations, religious denominations, civic associations, and the like.” (1997, p. 14).

Domínguez and Arford (2010) said the fundamental aspect of social capital involves relationships and trust, and they suggested social capital includes positive effects such as support and helpful information. When community members interact with one another, social capital is built (Scott, 2017). High amounts of social capital create new ties within communities and foster the creation of new ideas (Hustedde, 2015). “Connections can provide help, support,

opportunities, and even a sense of well-being that would not otherwise be possible” (Scott, 2017, p. 2).

Unlike other forms of capital, social capital is inherently shared by community members as a collective resource possessed by communities (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 2000). According to Domínguez and Arford (2010), social capital is the foundation for the development of community capital. Woolcock (2001) splits social capital into three different types: Bonding social capital consists of close ties with family, friends, and neighbors; bridging social capital consists of the strong ties between fellow workers or acquaintances; and linking social capital consists of the ties between people outside of someone’s community (Woolcock, 2001).

A relaxed venue where people can gather to meet friends and form new relationships is necessary for social capital (Dunbar et al., 2016). Putnam (2000) found the level of civic participation is declining in the United States, which is in turn decreasing the amount of venues where social capital is developed. Craft breweries can be relaxed venues where social capital is developed; breweries can occupy the third space and build community (Weilar, 2000). According to Weilar (2000) craft breweries are creating a place where people create community, as opposed to historically traditional venues such as Elks Clubs or bowling leagues that require active membership and participation (Putnam, 2000). This unique positioning enables craft breweries and brewery personnel to become leaders within their communities. Americans connect with their communities more frequently through informal connections that they strike up through activities such as having coffee with regulars at the local coffee shop or getting a drink together after work (Putnam, 2000). Informal encounters like a conversation shared between two customers at a brewery taproom build social capital (Putnam, 2000). Informal connections, which can take place at breweries are very important in sustaining and creating social networks (Putnam, 2000).

Related to social capitalism is the idea of coopetition. Coopetition refers to a theory of market relations that seeks to explain why businesses and organizations simultaneously cooperate and compete with one another (Mathias et al., 2017). It is the dyadic relationship that emerges

when businesses cooperate in activities such as strategic alliance and compete against each other for sales and so on. (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). This theory helps explain why organizations cooperate with each other when economic conditions predict they would only compete against each other (Said, 2019).

Coopetition emerges when competitors are better off helping each other to help ensure higher quality products and an improvement on their market position against a larger organization (Mathias et al., 2017). Coopetition can build an emergent market and can legitimize a category or industry (Chen & Miller, 2012; Mathias et al., 2017). It helps nascent industries and companies compete with large, global business rivals (Kraus et al., 2019). The benefits of coopetition include access to resources of shared knowledge (Mathias et al., 2017). Craft breweries engage in coopetition in a variety of ways, such as sharing information with one another and hosting events together (Kraus et al., 2019). Coopetition explains how belonging to a place or community can increase innovation, identity, and shape practices (Said, 2019). Mutual benefit and trust are important aspects of coopetition (Kraus et al., 2019). Craft breweries that focus on collaborations can establish brand loyalty, trust, and innovation with their competitors (Marchak, 2015; Said, 2019). The influence of craft breweries become stronger when craft breweries work collectively together (Myles & Breen, 2017). Nascent industries can surmount the limits of being small by forming relationships with other craft breweries (Flanagan et al., 2018) and studies show the craft brewery industry is an example of sustained coopetition and resembles craft brewers' collective identity (Said, 2019). Flanagan et al. (2018) found craft breweries even recommend and promote other craft breweries to their customers.

### **Craft brewery branding and marketing tactics.**

A brand represents a product, goods, service, or idea, and marketing tactics are the tools businesses and organization use to deliver a message (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Creating a design and product consumers notice and can relate to is important for craft brewery marketing (Lahnalampi, 2016). Craft breweries typically attract customers through differentiation,

innovation, and using local ties (Notte, 2016). Successful craft beer marketing stems from marketing strategies that focus on local attachments and the quality of their products (McQuiston, 2013).

Being part of the neighborhood allows craft breweries to build trust with the residents and helped the breweries share their stories (Notte, 2016). Being on tap in local bars and restaurants, is another way craft breweries can market and distribute their products, expand their customer base, and forge local ties (Lahnalampi, 2016; McQuiston, 2013). Many craft breweries use events, tastings, and local or regional festivals to reach consumers in person and social media platforms to connect with a larger audience (McQuiston, 2013).

Events and festivals are also opportunities for breweries to create word-of-mouth advertising because they attract consumers to the breweries (Francioni & Byrd, 2012). Word-of-mouth marketing is person-to-person communication between people about a product, service, or brand (Nyilasy, 2006). Word-of-mouth marketing is a natural occurrence of consumer behavior (Nyilasy, 2006) and is a powerful form of marketing that can lead to positive or negative effects of a brand (Kolter & Armstrong, 2016). If brewery visitors are satisfied with this brewery experience positive word-of-mouth occurs and can strengthen a brewery's brand (Francioni & Byrd, 2012; Fountain et. al., 2008).

## **Summary**

Branding is commonly used in craft breweries, and breweries use differentiation, such as brewing different styles of beer, to set themselves apart from competition (Gatrell et al., 2018; Keller, 1998). The use of local history and heritage in branding is one way breweries forge a sense of local identity (Taylor et al., 2020). Often craft breweries name their breweries or beers after local ties (Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014). Due to their place branding strategies, craft breweries play a significant role in place making (Fletcher, 2016). Craft breweries, which can be linked to place, create an opportunity for people to make connections due to their local nature



(Fletcher, 2016; Yool & Comrie, 2014). Sense of place appears to be a branding strategy because of its local appeal (Hede & Watne, 2013).

Due to their local nature craft breweries have been seen as locations that serve as a third space for communities. Third space locations best serve their communities by being local and inclusive (Oldenburg, 1999), and they are relaxed venues where people can gather and mingle (Hickey, 2012). Locations where people can foster connections and form new relationships are necessary for social capital to be built (Dunbar et al., 2016). Coopetition is a concept related to social capital, and it explains why business such as craft breweries simultaneously compete and cooperate amongst one another (Mathias et al., 2017). Nascent industries can overcome the limits of being small by forming relationships with others, and the influence of craft breweries becomes stronger when breweries work together (Flanagan et al., 2018; Myles & Breen, 2017). Craft breweries use coopetition to collaborate together to host events and festivals, which are avenues breweries use to promote their brand (McQuiston, 2013). Events and festivals also allow breweries to interact with their customers and be part of their communities (Notte, 2016).

## CHAPTER II

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research was to understand how breweries establish their brand with respect to the communities they are in. The following research questions guided the first manuscript:

- RQ1: How do breweries establish salience within the respective community?
- RQ2: How do brewery personnel differentiate the brewery and their products?
- RQ3: How do brewery personnel create, participate, and interact with community-based events representing the brewery?
- RQ4: How do the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and their respective community members?
- RQ5: How does the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments?

The purpose of the second study was to understand how key community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities. The following research questions guided the second manuscript:

- RQ1: How has the brewery affected the community?
- RQ2: How have community members reacted to the brewery?
- RQ3: How do community members believe brewery personnel engage and

interact with the community?

- RQ4: What role do community members see the breweries having within their community?
- RQ5: What do community members perceive as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities?

To address these research questions, a thorough understanding of the brewery personnel and community stakeholders' perspectives was needed. Chapter II describes the methods and procedures used to conduct this study. This chapter includes the research design, qualitative research, semi-structured interviews, the participant selection process, data collection, data analysis, measures of validations, and researcher subjectivity.

## **Research Design**

### **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is used when a complex detailed understanding of an issue is necessary (Creswell, 2007). This type of research is an “approach to inquiry that begins with assumptions, worldviews, possibly a theoretical lens, and seeks to understand the context or settings of the participants,” (Creswell, 2007, p. 51). Qualitative research attempts to make sense of and interpret a situation in terms of the meaning people bring to them by studying things in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This type of research is useful when studying social relations and when the researcher wants to empower individuals to share their stories and hear their voices (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2018). A qualitative approach was important for this study because, “qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations” (Flick, 2018, p. 3).

Therefore, utilizing a qualitative approach to study this subject was ideal to understand the different perspectives of brewery personnel and community stakeholders. Qualitative research yields detailed and specific data, which leads to an in-depth understanding of the subject being

studied (Flick, 2018). The qualitative research approach is guided by the study and allows the research questions to guide the methodology rather than the other way around (Flick, 2018).

## **Interviews**

For this study data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Interviews in qualitative research are usually more flexible and focus on the interviewees' opinions and experiences leading to rich information (Bryman, 2008). Pole and Lampard (2002) describe qualitative interviews as having characteristics of conversations while dealing in-depth with the individual case. A semi-structured interview guide is "more or less open questions" (p. 217) to guide the interview and the interviewer and allow the interviewee to "answer these questions freely" (Flick, 2018, p. 217). Outline or semi-structured interviews are "in-depth qualitative interviewing" (Ruben & Ruben, 2012, p. 29).

In semi-structured interviews "interviewed subjects' viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or a questionnaire" (Flick, 2018 p. 216). Using a semi-structured interview allows questions to be "adapted to flow of the interview conversation" (Flick, 2018, p. 209) because the order of questions is not fixed. Follow-up questions and probes can lead to more in-depth information and details pertaining to main questions (Flick, 2018). A semi-structured interview, which uses a flexible question route, allows room for "experience and knowledge of each interviewee" (Ruben & Ruben, 2012, p. 37). Using semi-structured interviews allowed for the questions on the interview guide to be asked in a flexible order best suited for each interviewee to gain the perspectives of both brewery personnel and community stakeholders.

## **Methods**

### **Participants and Sampling**

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study to select participants who would help facilitate the best understanding of the topic (Creswell, 2007). Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to address the varying aspects of the study (Creswell,

2007). Six breweries were selected from a list of 42 breweries within the state of Oklahoma as of January 2018 (Holcomb et al., 2018). Breweries were chosen to encompass a wide range of locations and reflect a variety of experience levels. The six breweries picked ranged in operations' tenure to include one of the oldest breweries in the state, some breweries with a few years' experience, and one of the newest breweries in Oklahoma. The six breweries chosen are located in four different towns to represent a variety of communities. There were two subsets of participants for this study, one for each manuscript.

This study consisted of 22 in-depth interviews. The number of interviews for this study was chosen to allow for representation of both brewery personnel and key community stakeholder population perspectives and to represent various areas throughout Oklahoma. The first manuscript consisted of brewery personnel (Table 1). Two brewery personnel members from each of six selected breweries were targeted to be interviewed to create the population for the first manuscript. For one brewery, only one person was interviewed because the owner did not believe anyone else could provide adequate information due to the limited scale of the operation. The participants for the first manuscript included brewery owners, taproom managers, and marketing personnel. After interview five for the brewery personnel interviews and interview six for the key community stakeholder interviews, I was no longer hearing new information, but interviews continued to gather responses from the planned breweries and communities. Data saturation had been reached, which concluded data collection (Guest et al., 2006).

**Table 1***Participants from the first manuscript*

Pseudonym	Description
Austin	Brewery co-owner
Brock	Brewery co-owner and head brewer
Clay	Brewery co-founder and head brewer
Dalton	Brewer co-owner
Emily	Taproom manager
Finn	Brewery owner and head brewer
Gavin	Brewery owner and head brewer
Hadley	Brewery co-owner
Isaac	Taproom manager
Josephine	Marketing director
Karleen	Taproom manager

*Note.* Due to confidentiality purposes the number of breweries in each brewery's community was not provided.

The population for the second manuscript consisted of 11 key community stakeholders (Table 2). At least two community stakeholders from each of the four communities of the breweries were interviewed to represent the community stakeholders' perspectives. Three community stakeholder interviewees were able to give a statewide perspective along with the specific town they were from. The participants for the second manuscript included a former director of a city development organization, a marketing director, a sales director, a business

CEO, a journalist, directors of a community development organization, an apparel business owner and economic development managers.

**Table 2**

*Participants from the second manuscript*

Pseudonym	Description
Michaela	Executive director, multi-brewery town
Natalie	Sales director, one-brewery town
Oliva	Marketing director, one-brewery town
Penny	Executive director of a community development organization, multi-brewery town
Quincy	Former director of a community development organization, multi, brewery town
Ryan	Journalist, multi-brewery town
Shawn	Apparel business owner, multi-brewery town
Taylor	Executive business director, multi-brewery town
Uriah	Economic development project manager, one-brewery town
Veronica	CEO of a local business, one-brewery town
Walker	Business development director, multi-brewery town

Community stakeholder participants were chosen using a snowball sampling method (Creswell, 2007). This sampling method is frequently used once a researcher breaks into a population; this method identifies participants of interest from people who know participants who are information-rich (Creswell, 2007). At the end of the brewery personnel interviews, the participants were asked whom they recommended be interviewed. Community stakeholders were also asked whom they recommended be interviewed at the end of each interview, which led to more participants.

## **Interview Guide**

For this study data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Pre-interviews were used to help create the interview guides for the brewery personnel and the community stakeholders. I met with a brewery owner to explain the purpose of the study. The information provided by the brewery owner was used to develop questions for the brewery personnel guide. This owner participated in the study and was formally interviewed after the interview guide was created. To help develop the questions for the community stakeholder interview guide, I met separately with two different influential community stakeholders. After meeting with these individuals their feedback was used to develop the questions for the community interview.

To finalize the interview questions, feedback received from Laura Greenhaw, an agricultural leadership faculty member at the University of Florida, Quisto Settle, chair of my thesis committee, and Audrey E. H. King, a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University was applied. The interview guides asked direct, open-ended questions to gather responses from participants regarding the brewery personnel and community stakeholders' perspectives relating to the brewery and its engagements within the community.

The interview guides for brewery personnel and community stakeholders can be viewed in Appendices B and C. The interview guide for brewery personnel was developed to address the topics of community engagement and interactions, future goals, interactions between breweries, and branding techniques, and the third space concept. The interview guide for community stakeholders was developed to address the topics of community member reactions, community member interactions, and brand awareness, and the third space concept. Both interview guides had the aim of addressing the concept of breweries as a third space (i.e., a place where community members can engage with each other).

Prior to the interviews beginning, the participants signed a consent form, which can be found in Appendix D. Introductory questions were executed to introduce the topics and the main



theme of the interviews. I used follow-up questions and probes to gain more in-depth information pertaining to main questions (Flick, 2018).

The brewery personnel interview guide consisted of nine main questions paired with two to four follow-up questions under each main question. The main questions referred to the overall perception the brewery personnel have of the brewery and the community engagements the brewery personnel participate in. The community stakeholder guide was made up of seven main questions with one to four follow-up questions under each main question. Each interview guide can be viewed in further detail in Appendixes B and C. The main questions were intended to be research questions asked using everyday language (Hernmanns, 2004). The follow-up questions were intended to “stimulate more details or depth at certain points in the interview,” (p. 217) to keep the conversation going, and to clarify information (Flick, 2018). Probe questions, such as “Can you tell me more about what you just said?” were utilized as spontaneous interventions to gain further detail and illustration (Flick, 2018).

In the brewery personnel interviews the interview began with the question, “Can you tell me about the brewery?” The follow-up questions were more specific and asked the interviewee to describe community members’ reactions to the brewery, specifically any compliments or complaints they have heard. The community stakeholder interview guide began by asking the interviewee “Can you tell me about your connection to the brewery?” The follow-up question was “How did you first hear about the brewer?”

### **Data Collection**

Before any data was collected for this study permission to collect data through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained. A copy of IRB documentation and approval is available in Appendix A. At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the study, the amount of time estimated to complete the interview, and the plans for using the results were explained to participants. Each interviewee completed a consent form before beginning (Creswell, 2007). Participants were recruited using a recruitment email. A copy of the initial

recruitment email script is available in Appendix E. Email addresses were obtained from brewery websites, business or company websites, and social media platforms.

The brewery personnel interviews were conducted at each interviewees' location of choice. All but one interview was at a brewery participants owned or to which the participant was employed. The locations of the brewery personnel interviews ranged from offices, taproom tables, taproom couches and recliners, the taproom bar counter, and a conference room. One participant had a non-brewery primary job, so the interview took place at that location instead of the brewery. Other brewery staff members were around during the two interviews that took place at the taproom bar counter and tables. The other staff members were in and out of the taproom area but did not participate in the discussion. Three interviews were interrupted because the interviewee was needed to answer business or operational questions. The interview and recording was paused and began again after the interviewee had handled the interruption. This might have affected participants' responses.

In-person interviews and phone interviews were conducted with community stakeholders from each of the respective communities the breweries are located within. Four community stakeholder interviews were conducted over the phone and seven were conducted in-person. The phone interviews took place instead of in-person interviews because the interviewee was unable to meet in-person due to schedule complications and time constraints. The in-person interviews of community stakeholders were conducted at each of the interviewees' location choice. These locations included personal offices, conference rooms, communal office sofas, and a local bookstore.

The brewery personnel interviews began on January 28, 2020 and were completed on March 2, 2020. The community stakeholder interviews began February 27, 2020 and were completed March 17, 2020. Due to the pandemic, COVID-19, non-essential businesses in 27 counties across Oklahoma closed Wednesday, March 25, 2020, but fortunately all interviews were conducted prior to the shutdown.

All interviews were audio recorded and I took notes. At the end of each interview, I summarized the main points of the interview to ensure consistency, which was used as a member check (Flick, 2009). For confidentiality purposes, each participant was assigned a pseudonym and all identifying information was removed. Pseudonyms assigned to participants from the brewery personnel population began with letter A and ended with letter K. Participants from the community stakeholder population were assigned pseudonyms starting at M and ending at W. The data was transcribed verbatim using Temi, which is a professional transcription service.

### **Data Analysis**

The combination of Glaser's Constant Comparative Method (Glaser, 1965) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) was used to identify themes. Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method involves breaking down data into 'incidents' and coding them into categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thematic coding combines other approaches to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within data (Flick, 2018). Glaser's (1965) technique aims to "stimulate thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 334). Thematic analysis organizes and "describes data in (rich) detail" (2006, p. 79). This method was used to understand "various aspects of the research topic" and to find patterns (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 81).

To begin the analysis process, the transcriptions done by Temi were listened to, confirmed, and cleaned. Pseudonyms were created for the interviewees and the names of the brewery and town locations were masked. After reading and listening to the transcripts, codes were developed (Flick, 2018). Semantic codes (i.e., "meanings expressed verbally") and latent codes (i.e., "underlying meanings") were applied to the data (Flick, 2018, p. 475). Coding is mainly focused on developing concepts that can be used for sorting, labeling, and comparing pieces of data (Flick, 2018). Some statements were coded into multiple codes. Codes and themes were developed during the process of "describing, classifying and interrupting" the transcribed text (Creswell, 2007).

Incidents found in each interview were coded and compared to other incidents (Glaser, 1965). After incidents were compared, these codes were sorted into various themes. The themes were linked through the constant comparisons. After the boundaries were set, the themes become more focused. The boundaries consisted of whether the incident was mentioned in over half of the interviews or in someone from each community represented mentioned something similar.

The software MAXQDA was used to code each interview. Using MAXQDA as a coding management system for data analysis helped clarify the coding and data analysis processes (Trochim, 2020). The potential advantages of using a computer program are the program can serve as a beneficial tool for organization of files and efficiency but did not conduct analysis or draw conclusions. Qualitative researchers “want tools which support analysis but leave the analyst firmly in charge” (Fielding & Lee, 1998, p. 167). The software also served as a tool for transparency of the research process (Trochim, 2020).

### **Measures of Validation**

Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed alternative criteria for judging the strength of qualitative research to better reflect the assumptions involved in qualitative research. Their alternative criteria are commonly used to describe the soundness of qualitative research. Their criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility involves establishing the results of the study are believable (Trochim, 2020). Using data triangulation can lead to a broader understanding of an area of interest, and it is used as a qualitative research strategy to test soundness through gathering information from various sources and converging it (Carter et al., 2014). To help ensure credibility of the interview guides, Dr. Laura Greenhaw, an agricultural leadership faculty member at the University of Florida, Dr. Quisto Settle, chair of the thesis committee, and Audrey E.H. King a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University reviewed the interview guides. The participants’ recorded and transcribed responses were compared to the handwritten notes on the interviewer’s guide for each interview for credibility measures. Using verbatim transcripts helped maintain the rich data and

ensure credibility (Creswell, 2007). At the end of each interview, the main points of the interview were summarized to ensure consistency, which was used as a member check (Flick, 2018).

Transferability refers to the degree the findings of the study can be applied to other contexts (Trochim, 2020). To help with transferability the context of the interviews was described. This description included where the interviews occurred, what they were about, and the impending pandemic.

Dependability is in reference to the assumption of repeatability; essentially dependability refers to the extent that the same results would occur if the study was repeated (Trochim, 2020). According to Flick (2018) “Dependability is checked through the process of auditing” (p. 548). Maintaining an audit trail provided a description for the research taking place from beginning to end (Flick, 2018). All data was collected from interviews using audio recorders and the interviewers’ notes to create an audit trail. This study collected data from more than one location and from different population groups to create data triangulation and ensure the dependability of the data through multiple sources (Carter et al., 2014).

Confirmability is the degree in which the results of the study could be confirmed by others (Trochim, 2020). To aid confirmability, the main points of the interview were summarized at the end of each interview to serve as a member check (Flick, 2009). This also allows for confirmation of the findings (Flick, 2009). Dr. Quisto Settle reviewed the audit trail to aid confirmability (Flick, 2009).

### **Researcher Subjectivity**

I am an agricultural communications graduate student. I grew up in a rural town in northeast Colorado about an hour from Denver and the Front Range region. Denver and the Front Range region is where a large share of the Colorado craft brewery industry is located. Colorado has a large craft brewery scene. I have personal acquaintances involved in the craft brewery industry. I received my associate of arts degree from Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, Colorado. While I was in Sterling there was a brewery in the planning stages. I received my

undergraduate degree in agribusiness from Kansas State University. My agribusiness background might affect my interpretations of the data of this study. I do not have any direct affiliation with any Oklahoma craft breweries, but I do have a personal interest in the craft brewery industry. I consume both macro and craft beer. I prefer craft beer over widely produced beer. I found value and importance in the data collection and analysis of this study because of the ties to local product, the agricultural industry, and branding.

### **Summary**

Research was conducted to understand the role Oklahoma craft breweries play in communities and breweries brand salience. Semi-structured interviews were used to understand brewery personnel and community stakeholder' perceptions of Oklahoma craft breweries role in the community and product differentiation, which allows participants' viewpoints to be expressed (Flick, 2018). The study consisted of 22 qualitative in-depth interviews during the winter for 2020. There were two subsets of participants due to this being a two-manuscript study. For each manuscript, 11 participants were interviewed. Brewery participants for this study were recruited using a purposive sampling method made possible by information gained from a craft brewer. Snowball sampling was used to reach influential community stakeholders and other brewery personal once participants were secured. The interviews were audio recorded, and the handwritten notes were taken during the interviews. The audio from the interviews was transcribed using a professional transcription service and imported into MAXQDA. Data was analyzed using Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method and Braun and Clarks' (2006) thematic analysis to identify themes and subthemes.

## CHAPTER III

### MANUSCRIPT ONE

#### **Introduction**

Craft breweries are small, independent, and traditional businesses (Hede & Watne, 2013). Craft brewers combine historic beer styles with their own unique twist to create an innovated beer (Brewers Association, 2020). The popularity of craft beer can be tied to the unique character of craft beer, the demand for product differentiation, and the trend of neolocalism, which is the intentional attempt to obtain local attachment (Baginski & Bell, 2011; Shortridge, 1996).

The popularization of local, hand-crafted beer has led to an increase in demand of craft breweries in large part to changing tastes and preferences of buyers (Holcomb et al., 2018). Craft breweries tend to appeal to the type of customers who seek new tastes and experiences (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). The success of the craft beer industry can also be tied to the higher perceived economic value the consumers get, and the experience of drinking craft beer (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). Craft breweries tend to be involved in product donations, volunteerism, social responsibility programs, sponsorships, community events, and philanthropies (Brewers Association, 2019). Craft breweries demonstrate commitment to sustainability, social responsibility, creativity, and tradition, which draws in niche, community-driven markets (Gatrell et al., 2018; Sprengeler, 2016). Their commitment to sustainability and social responsibility attract millennials, who prefer to buy products that reflect their values (McCluskey & Shreay, 2011; Sprengeler, 2016). Much of the appeal of craft beer can also be tied to their public claims

about traditional and authentic craft production (Carroll & Swaminathan, 2000). Craft beer brands are “generally presented as entrepreneurial and creative” (Hede & Watne, 2013, para. 23). Their focus on differentiation is one of the main factors that causes craft breweries to stand out against macro-brewers like MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch (Chew, 2016). Craft beers have started to receive more attention (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018).

From 2012 to 2017 the traditional beer market declined by 16% while the craft brewery industry grew at an annual rate of 13.6% (Holcomb et al., 2018). Since 2007, the craft brewery industry revenue has grown more than 300% (Holcomb et al., 2018). The craft brewery industry accounts for more than 24% of the U.S. beer market (Watson et al., 2019). In 2018 Oklahoma craft breweries made a \$646 million economic impact by producing 79,747 barrels of craft beer (Brewers Association, 2019).

The number of craft breweries in Oklahoma operating per year has increased since 2011, when there were fewer than 10 breweries in the state (Brewers Association, 2019). Oklahoma is now home to 55 craft breweries with more in planning stages (Brewers Association, 2019). The growth of craft breweries in Oklahoma reflects the general trends in the United States. The number of craft breweries in the United States has increased since the mid 1980s (Gatrell et al., 2018). Oklahoma’s recent growth of craft breweries can be attributed to recent law changes (Roach, 2016). The passage of Oklahoma Senate Bill 424 allowed breweries to sell beer over 3.2% alcohol by volume or full strength beer directly to customers and motivated breweries to open on-premise taprooms (Holcomb et al., 2018).

Craft breweries often use local heritage, landscape, and culture of their community or state to name their beers, create label designs, their logo, and even the name of the brewery to forge a connection and ingrain themselves brewery into the community (Flack 1997; Schnell & Reese 2003, 2014; Taylor et al., 2020). The conscious effort to create a sense of place based on attributes of their community is neolocalism (Holtkamp et al., 2016; Shortridge, 1996). Reconnecting with places, creating a sense of place, and supporting local economies are factors of



neolocalism (Shortridge, 1996; Flack, 1997). The neolocalism movement is driving the U.S. craft beer movement (Schnell & Reese, 2003). Schnell (2013) suggested the trend toward supporting the local economy and businesses is what makes neolocalism different than local ties of the past. People are “cultivating local ties by choice, not by necessity” (Schnell, 2013, p. 56).

A comprehensive understanding of how brewery personnel perceive they establish their brand with respect to the communities they are in is needed (Hede & Watne, 2013). Other studies have focused on the names and logos, but neolocalism can be assessed through observing community engagement and sustainability practices (Reid et al., 2014). There is little academic research related to craft brewery branding or the role a craft brewery has in a community. Oklahoma has a relatively new craft brewery industry that has not been evaluated in terms of branding. This study aimed to discover how breweries establish their brand with respect to their communities.

### **Theoretical Framework & Literature Review**

“A brand is a complex, interrelated system of management decisions and consumer reactions that identifies a product (goods, services, or ideas), builds awareness of it, and creates meaning for it” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 6). A brand’s success can be correlated with its saliency (Ehrenberg et al. 1997). External saliency is the “presence of a brand in the surroundings of a consumer” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 349). Internal saliency “has to do with the relative accessibility of a brand representation in memory” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 349). It is created through three main sources: consumer usage and experiences, the perception of a brand in both the social and physical environment, and the conception of communication manifestations (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Companies or brands use a differentiation strategy to establish saliency (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Differentiation is when companies “aim at distinguishing themselves from the prototype brand in one or several dimensions relevant to a specific consumer segment” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 172). The goal of differentiation is to establish a branding concept that sets a

brand apart from others (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009; Keller, 1998). Businesses invest in branding because brand reputation and image forge differentiation (Mudambi, 2002). Branding is a powerful tool that can influence consumers in multiple ways.

Schnell and Reese (2014) identified place branding as a trend used by craft breweries to create a sense of belonging and community. Place branding is the idea that regions, cities, and communities can be branded and has evolved from research regarding place image and marketing (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). According to Weilar (2000) craft breweries stand in for a city's competitive "place-brand." Place branding is anchored in history, culture, environment, and links people to places creating an attachment (Govers & Go, 2016). Place branding can bridge the gap between a product being offered and sense of place by forging place attachment (Govers & Go, 2016).

Sense of place includes the concepts of place identity and place attachment and can be strengthened through local ties (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Tuan, 1991). Sense of place appears to be a branding strategy for craft breweries, and it can help reinforce emotional attachments between consumers and brands (Hede & Watne, 2013). It is a tested approach to branding and helps foster a closeness with people around local products and local history because consumers can connect with places and products associated through sense of place (Hede & Watne, 2013; Schnell & Reese, 2003).

Sense of place allows businesses and consumers to create and recreate brands together (Hede & Watne, 2013). Fournier (1998) suggested brands can have relationships with consumers, and the quality of the relationship is correlated with the meaningful actions of the brand. Sense of place focuses on how people feel about places and the relationship people have with places they live (Rantanen, 2003; Relph, 1976). It evokes feelings of belonging, and "burrows into the heart of the symbolic place-consciousness" of residents (Flack, 1997, p. 49). Utilizing place branding and the attempt to create a sense of place has increased the popularity of craft breweries and can help breweries build a lasting brand (Flack, 1997; Gatrell et al., 2018).

Events, festivals, and tastings are also opportunities for breweries to connect with consumers, build their brand, and create word-of-mouth advertising (Fountain et. al., 2008; Francioni & Byrd, 2012; McQuiston, 2013). Word-of-mouth marketing is person-to-person communications between people about a product, service, or brand (Nyilasy, 2006). If brewery visitors are satisfied with this brewery experience, positive word-of-mouth occurs (Francioni & Byrd, 2012). Word-of-mouth can spread the brand of business, especially businesses that appeal to millennials because they are more likely to listen to the recommendations of their friends or online reviews for purchase decisions (Granase, 2012; McCluskey & Shreay, 2011). Events and free entertainment options can strengthen brewery brands and help breweries establish themselves in their communities (Fountain et. al., 2008).

Craft breweries focus on collaborations to establish brand loyalty, trust, and innovation with their competitors (Marchak, 2015; Said, 2019). This relates to the concept of coopetition, which is a theory that explains why business both compete and cooperate with each other (Mathias et al., 2017). Craft breweries can build an emergent market through coopetition (Chen & Miller, 2012; Mathias et al., 2017). This concept also explains how belonging to a place or community can increase innovation, identity, and shape practices such as businesses being community focused (Said, 2019). Putnam (2000) proposed craft breweries can ingrain themselves into the local community as a third space. Hickey (2012) described third spaces as community living rooms where people gather who are not family or coworkers, which is what they are at their first space (i.e., home) or their second space (i.e., work). Third spaces are familiar places where people can mingle and build connections (Mifsud, 2018), and they are places where interests and values intersect (Hickey, 2012). Oldenburg (1999) suggested third spaces such as bookstores, coffee shops, and craft breweries are the heart of communities and help unite neighborhoods. Mifsud (2018) suggested craft breweries are essential elements for communities because they create a unique social value and are third space locations.

Related to the idea of third spaces is the concept of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as social relations that have the ability or can increase the ability of a person to advance their interests. When community members interact with one another, social capital is built (Scott, 2017). High amounts of social capital create new ties within communities and foster the creation of new ideas (Hustedde, 2015). The fundamental aspect of social capital involves relationships and trust and includes positive effects such as support and helpful information (Domínguez & Arford, 2010). Putnam (2000) presented the idea that social capital can be a collective resource possessed by communities. According to Domínguez and Arford (2010) social capital is the foundation for the development of community capital.

A relaxed venue where people can gather to meet friends and form new relationships is necessary for social capital (Dunbar et al., 2016). Putnam (2000) found the level of civic participation is declining in the United States, which is in turn decreasing the amount of venues where social capital is developed. Craft breweries can be relaxed venues where social capital is developed through their ability to serve as a third space and build community (Weilar, 2000).

### **Purpose & Research Questions**

The purpose of this research was to understand how breweries establish their brand with respect to their communities. The following research questions guided the first manuscript:

- RQ1: How do breweries establish salience within the respective community?
- RQ2: How do brewery personnel differentiate the brewery and their products?
- RQ3: How do brewery personnel create, participate, and interact with community-based events representing the brewery?
- RQ4: How do the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and their respective community members?
- RQ5: How do the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments?

## **Methods**

Qualitative research is an “approach to inquiry that begins with assumptions, worldviews, possibly a theoretical lens, and seeks to understand the context or settings of the participants,” (Creswell, 2007, p. 51). It was important to use a qualitative approach for this study to gain an understanding of brewery personnel perspectives regarding how breweries establish their brand with respect to the communities they are located in. This type of research approach yields rich, in-depth data and allows research questions to guide the methodology (Flick, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews, which use a flexible question route, were used to collect data. This approach allows questions to be asked in order of the flow of the interview conversation (Flick, 2018). To develop the semi-structured interview guide, I met with a brewery owner to explain the purpose of the study. The feedback from the pre-interview was used to develop the interview guide. This owner participated in the study and was formally interviewed later. After the interview guide was created, feedback from Laura Greenhaw, an agricultural leadership faculty member at the University of Florida, Quisto Settle, chair of my thesis committee, and Audrey E. H. King, a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University, was utilized to finalize the guide.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2007). From a list of 42 breweries within Oklahoma as of January 2018 (Holcomb et al., 2018), six breweries were selected. The breweries were chosen to provide a variety of locations and experience levels. One of the oldest breweries in the state, some breweries with a few years’ experience, and one of the newest breweries in Oklahoma were included. A recruitment email was sent to the six breweries. Email addresses were obtained from the business website or social media platforms.

The target was to have two personnel from each brewery participate in the study, which served as the sample this study. Only one person was interviewed at one brewery because the owner did not believe anyone else could provide adequate information due to the limited scale of the operation. A total of 11 participants were interviewed. The participants included brewery

owners and co-owners, taproom managers, and marketing personnel. After the fifth interview I was not hearing new information, and after 11 participants were interviewed, data collection concluded because data saturation has occurred (Guest et al., 2006).

Prior to the interviews beginning, participants completed a consent form in which the purpose of the study, time estimated to complete the interview, and plans for using the results were explained. The interview guide consisted of nine main questions, which were paired with two to four follow-up questions. The main questions were intended to ask about the research in conversational language (Hernmanns, 2004). The main topics addressed were how the brewery is promoted, how the brewery is positioned in the community, how the brewery interacts within the community, the relationship between the brewery and the community, and how the brewery differs from other businesses. The questions were direct and open-ended to gain the brewery personnel perspectives relating to the brewery and its brand within the community.

All but one interview took place at the brewery the participants owned or worked at. One participant had a non-brewery primary job and that interview took place at that location instead of the brewery. Interviews took place in offices, at taproom tables, taproom couches and recliners, the taproom bar counter, and a conference room. There was other brewery staff around during the two interviews that took place at the taproom bar counter and tables. The other brewery staff members did not participate in the discussion, but they were in and out of the area. Three interviews were interrupted because the interviewee was needed to answer business or operational questions. The interviews and recordings were paused and began again after the interruption had been handled. These factors might have affected participants' responses.

The interviews began on January 28, 2020 and were completed on March 2, 2020. All data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic that caused business closures. The interviews ranged from 20 to 63 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded, and I took handwritten notes during each. At the end of the interview, the conversation was summarized to ensure consistency and to serve as a member check (Flick, 2009). The data was transcribed verbatim using Temi, a

professional transcription service. For confidentiality purposes each participant was assigned a pseudonym, and all identifying information was removed or masked.

The transcripts were listened to, confirmed, and cleaned. MAXQDA was used to code the interviews. The software served as a tool for transparency of the research process (Trochim, 2020) and made coding more organized. After reading and listening to the transcripts, codes were developed (Flick, 2018). Semantic codes (i.e., “meanings expressed verbally”) and latent codes (i.e., “underlying meanings”) were applied to the data (Flick, 2018, p. 475). Codes and themes were developed during the process of “describing, classifying and interpreting” the transcribed text (Creswell, 2007).

The data was analyzed using a combination of Glaser’s (1965) constant comparative method and thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). Glaser’s (1965) constant comparative method breaks data into incidents, and thematic coding is used to identify and report patterns or themes in data (Flick, 2018). Incidents found in each interview were coded and compared to other incidents (Glaser, 1965). After incidents were compared, these codes were sorted into various themes. The themes were linked through the constant comparisons. After the boundaries were set, the themes become more focused. Boundaries for themes consisted of whether the incident was mentioned in over half of the interviews or in someone from each of the breweries mentioned similar things. More focused themes emerged after boundaries were placed.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed alternative criteria for judging the strength of qualitative research to better reflect the assumptions involved in qualitative research. Their criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Laura Greenhaw, Quisto Settle, and Audrey E.H. King reviewed the interview guides to help ensure credibility. The participants’ recorded and transcribed responses were compared to the handwritten notes on the interviewer’s guide for each interview for credibility measures. Using verbatim transcripts also helped ensure credibility (Creswell, 2007).

At the end of each interview, the main points of the interview were summarized to ensure consistency, which was used as a member check (Flick, 2018). To help with transferability the context of the interviews was described. All data was collected from interviews using audio recorders and the interviewers' notes to create an audit trail to ensure dependability (Flick, 2018). Data was collected from more than one location and from different population groups to create data triangulation and ensure the dependability of the data through multiple sources (Carter et al., 2014). To aid confirmability, the main points of the interview were summarized at the end of each interview to serve as a member check and to allow for confirmation of the findings, and Dr. Settle reviewed the audit trail for confirmability measures (Flick, 2009).

I am an agricultural communications graduate student. I grew up in a rural town in northeast Colorado. Colorado has a large craft brewery scene. I received my undergraduate degree in agribusiness from Kansas State University. My agribusiness background might affect my interpretations of the data of this study. I do not have any direct affiliation with any Oklahoma craft breweries, but I do have a personal interest in the craft brewery industry. I consume both macro and craft beer. I found value and importance in the data collection and analysis of this study because of the ties to local product, the agricultural industry, and branding.

## **Results**

### **RQ1: How do breweries have salience within the respective community?**

To understand what brewery personnel believe gave the breweries salience within the respective community participants were asked questions pertaining to the their overall view of the brewery, what role they believed the brewery served in the community, if products were named based on local things, if they sourced supplies locally, what they believed made the brewery different than other local businesses and breweries, and if they believed the brewery served as a third space for community members. Responses from the interviews yielded the following themes: brewery personnel want to be a business the community is proud of, brewery personnel believe they can lead by example, brewery personnel contribute to community cultural revival,



breweries function as a community gathering place or neighborhood living room, and breweries sell an experience as well as beer.

***Brewery personnel want to be a business the community is proud of***

When participants were asked what their overall view of the brewery was, they mentioned the goal of creating a local product community members could take a sense of ownership in. They mentioned wanting to be a business that bettered the community and a business community members could be proud of. Clay, brewery owner, said:

Um, so we started the brewery because I love the whole cultural aspect of it. I love beer and I wanted to create something that people could be proud of. And kind of take ownership in in a sense of “hey this is our local beer.”

Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

I think they see that we're going to be community involved and community focused, and we just want to leave the place better than we found it. Whether it's the beer industry, whether it's [Town] or just the corner block that we happened to brew on.

Austin, a brewery owner, said:

We're a casual, fun place for people to come and relax and, um, you know, be able to drink a product that is made locally, that's, they can be proud of it cause it's really a part of the heritage of [Town].

***Brewery personnel believe they can lead by example***

When participants were asked what role they believed the brewery had within the community, participants mentioned being part of two communities – the beer community industry and the relative community the brewery is located in. Many participants stated they believed they were in a position to lead by example and create a better community through their example and their community involvement. Emily, a taproom manager, said: “I'd like to think it's a leading by example kind of thing and doing positive things for the community and like surrounding areas.”

Isaac, a taproom manager, said:

Um, so to answer that two ways, to the beer community, you know leading the effort to create a community since a lot of times that falls apart, um and leading by example through our beer and events. As far as the actual community goes, I think we just want to be a really open, local business that really represents Oklahoma well.

***Brewery personnel contribute to community cultural revival***

Participants expressed how important it was to them to contribute to community development in terms of culture revival in a responsible way. They mentioned the local culture of their community being something they wanted to positively impact. Clay, a brewery owner, said, “There's also that balance of revitalization with gentrification and trying to do things responsibly. Um, but that sort of idea that if we can help to see this area residentially revitalized.” Finn, a brewery owner, said:

So, I think if we can do our little bit to contribute to kind of cultural community revival of local downtown [town] and have fun doing what we do and support the Oklahoma community in whatever way we can in the process, then I think we're doing it right.

Austin, a brewery owner, said:

We really are crafts people, and we want to stick around. We're typically young folks, business folks, entrepreneurs and we want to just enhance the culture of our towns, with regard to food, entertainment, leisure, all those kinds of things.

Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

I think being able to spend local dollars with local craftspeople is just so important to this continuous feedback loop and buy in of a community that is always looking to develop, advance, and redevelop what it means to be [town person], what it means to be Oklahoma and that's expressed through art, through food, through drink, all these things. We really wanted to embrace the local culture of [town].

***Breweries function as a community gathering place or neighborhood living room***

Participants were asked if they had heard of the third space concept. If they had not, the term was defined; if they had, the term was verified. After the participants understood what the concept was, they were asked if they believed the brewery served as a third space for community members. Participants defined the brewery as a community gathering place or neighborhood living room. Clay, a brewery owner, said:

We want the taproom obviously to continue to grow and to be able to kind of be a community space where people can come and enjoy a beer with family friendly. Um, but also, you know, whether we have live music or local candidates that are running for office or something that want to come in and use this as a platform to educate people on their platform, it's just kind of a community space where we can do that. We want this space to be a community space.

Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

Most breweries have open seating, long tables where people will sit and get together and have a chance of meeting somebody new, or uh, we've seen regulars at breweries eventually start getting to know each other. I think for a lot of people it is a third space or third place.

Gavin, a brewery owner, said:

Before we even opened the brewery, we spent our time talking about how we wanted it to be a community spot. We knew we wanted it to be this. You'll find people reading books, and we wanted it that way. We wanted to create a space that felt more European in that sense where it's like, well, just because you're drinking a beer doesn't mean you can't do something productive as well. And so, there's a lot of people that come here from all these organizations that we support just because they feel comfortable and want to support the space because they love what we're behind.

Finn, a brewery owner, said:

We just wanted to do that, that same community focused, that kind of living room feel where everybody's a friend here. It's very welcoming, which is why we put sofas and random things here but we just, we wanted [brewery] to be very, very welcoming, very family friendly. I think I want everybody to feel like they can come here and have a drink. We joke about putting one of these signs up on the door that said, we don't care if you're Republican or Democrat or Christian or Jewish or Muslim or atheist or gay or straight, just be nice and pay your bills. You know, that is kind of the mindset we have here.

***Breweries sell an experience as well as beer***

This theme emerged when participants explained craft beer as an experience for customers to enjoy rather than just a product for them to consume. Austin, brewery owner, said, "We're just, we're not just a typical bar, right. We're got kinds of a different, all different flavors of beers, and we're more of an experience as well and not just a bar." Brock, a brewery owner, said, "There's no better way, in my opinion, to have a conversation than over a glass of nice local beer." Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

We sell an experience. We sell an experience and that experience is experienced at our taproom, at our local market by getting to know the people that work there, the people that make the beer, the people that founded it. Um, that's so important in this industry and can't be shut off from your customers and expect to see it succeed in my opinion.

Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

We want to grow, but our main focus is to make high-quality, consistent, and new products for consumers to experience. That's part of being a craft brewery. We're not like Miller Lite or Coors Light or Anheuser-Busch. We don't want one staple product that we can just make for the masses and see how much we can spread our brand. We want to come out with new things all the time and be creative and innovative and come out with new products that people may have never tried.

## **RQ2: How do brewery personnel promote the brewery?**

To understand how the brewery is promoted, brewery personnel were asked how they promoted the brewery, with follow-up questions regarding advertising strategies, their social media presence, and their branding efforts. Responses from the interview yielded the following themes: word-of-mouth is a promotion factor, peer promotion promotes breweries, brewery events are used for promotion, and place branding is a branding technique for breweries.

### ***Word-of-mouth is a promotion factor***

When participants were asked about their promotion efforts, they mentioned having a social media presence to promote events and their brand, but participants mentioned word-of-mouth from customers as being a major factor for promotion. Isaac, a taproom manager, said:

It's kinda mind boggling actually. Um, until very, very recently we had never spent a dime on advertising. Um, and I would selfishly argue that we're like the busiest taproom in Oklahoma. I say our success is credit to the community because, you know, because we don't do any advertising; it's up to the community to do that outreach for us.

Clay, a brewery owner, said:

Again, the community involvement thing is a huge piece of promotion and being involved in so many different groups to kind of get to know these people and get to tell our story and let those people then evangelize for you, I guess in a lot of regards.

One brewery owner mentioned using paid advertising as a marketing plan to attract community members and consumers, which differed from the other brewery personnel' marketing strategies. Finn, a brewery owner, said:

Yeah, we use paid online advertising, print commercials, sponsoring [radio station] things like that. A study showed you have to make an impression at least four times before that impression becomes an engagement. You've got to see that four times, and then you've also got to see it on another platform or drive past a billboard or see a print ad somewhere

and it's that fourth or fifth time when it starts to register. So, we're coming at it from all angles to start to get people to remember us.

### ***Peer promotion promotes breweries***

Participants mentioned brewery personnel from competing breweries play a major role in attracting customers to their taprooms and as being the main factor to promote their brand. Emily, a taproom manager, said, “Um, we’re present on each other's social media, like as a business. Um, that's definitely a big thing. I think it is cool for customers to see us, like communicating back and forth on social media.” Brock, a brewery owner, said, “And so they're [competing breweries] promoting us, and we're promoting them.” Finn, a brewery owner, said:

If we don't have a type of beer someone's looking for, we're going to suggest something else for them to drink here, and then [we'll] say, ‘After this you should go check out...’ You know, whatever brewery we would recommend that has whatever they're looking for. I'm pretty sure from what I've heard other breweries do the same for us. It's always fun to talk to somebody sitting behind the bar and they'll say, ‘Oh yeah, we were just at [brewery]. They said we should come check you guys out too.’ And that's what we do for each other in the industry.

Isaac, a taproom manager, said:

People will come in and say, oh, I was at [local brewery] and the bartenders told me to come over here. Um, so it's really cool to have, um, even local, our peers essentially telling customers to come our way as well. So, yeah, that happens almost daily. It's, it's cool.

### ***Brewery events are used for promotion***

Participants mentioned participating in community events and beer festivals as a way to promote the name of the brewery. Josephine, a marketing director, said, “Going to like beer festivals and doing a lot of donations and stuff is part of us promoting ourselves.” Austin, a brewery owner, said, “Community engagement you know, that's another strategy of ours. It's kind

of a win-win. We think for giving back to the community and getting our name out there.”

Participants mentioned hosting community events as a way to gain customers and recognition.

Karleen, a marketing director, said, “I think the main thing is just those events I talk about and just kind of us getting out there and doing things for the community and getting our beers out there, word-of-mouth, and making good beer.”

### ***Place branding is a branding technique for breweries***

When participants were asked if they had a branding strategy for naming brewery products, they mentioned using local ties to name the brewery and some beers. Many participants mentioned using local ties for their flagship beers. Clay, a brewery owner, said, “Um, so we have tried to have some sort of local tie or some sort of, um, thing to that. We definitely use Oklahoma imagery.” Brock, a brewery owner, said, “We asked local farmers to send in pictures to kind of, you know, decorate the place. So, and I guess you can see a lot of our, all of our beer names are either local or ag.” Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

Early on there was a lot of ties to [town] a lot of our beers have ties to [town] And so that's kind of an approach that we've taken. Um, our very best seller is [beer name]. So obviously, that branding of that beer is tied to [town].

### **RQ3: Do brewery personnel create, participate, and interact with community-based events representing the brewery?**

To understand how the brewery personnel interacted with their respective communities, participants were asked if they participated in community engagements representing the brewery such as community events, charity events, if they hosted community events, and if they were on or part of community boards. The following themes were yielded from interview responses: brewery personnel are civically engaged, brewery personnel are local minded and partners of the community, brewery personnel are socially responsible, and brewery personnel believe in leaving communities and neighborhoods better than they found it.

### ***Brewery personnel are civically engaged***

When participants were asked how the brewery personnel interacted within the community and with community members, they mentioned being a business with open doors to all groups and having a willingness to give back to the community. When participants were asked what community events they engaged in, they mentioned hosting different events for community members to participate in including brewery events, community themed events, and charity events. Many participants also mentioned being on community boards or members of community organizations. Participants mentioned supporting their staff members' involvement. Austin, a brewery owner, said, "Breweries know they have to be part of their community, serve their community, and not only are their communities their customers." Austin also said:

Every brewery, uh, I think in Oklahoma, is usually very involved in some aspect of the community through fundraising efforts, uh, and giving to causes. I can't think of a brewery that is not engaged in its local community. We didn't ask for it, but we really are the local face, the main street face, of the alcohol industry.

Gavin, a brewery owner, said:

Before we opened we spent most of our time talking about the kind of place we wanted to be. We definitely were the event brewery, and I would say inspired the other local breweries to kind of have to almost do that. I mean, I think it's cool that now it's almost like a mandate if you're going to have a brewery, like you better be ready to give back and open up your doors for groups. And um, for us that was the whole reason for opening up a business. Um, we wanted to be a business that interacted in that way. And, I think the feedback you would get if you asked anyone about here, they will immediately tell you that that's a place that has a lot of heart and digs deep into that and is very focused on being the neighborhood brewery.

Brock, a brewery owner, said:



We've had baby showers, we've had graduations, we've had, uh, different, you know, groups, action groups and you know, different things like that all book tables and reserve spaces and have their meetings here, [town] running club is about to move their meetings here. People come in for live music, the board games, and different things.

Clay, a brewery owner, said:

It's important for us because this is our community, this is home. I had the opportunity to do this pretty much anywhere, but I wanted to do it here. [Town] is my home, and I wanted to do it here, and to be able to use that to make a positive impact. It's certainly something that's important to us.

Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

If it's [town], we hardly ever say no. If somebody asked us, we would be happy to collaborate on some kind of funding or anything that can help the community. We've done stuff with about every nonprofit in town that I can think of. It makes us feel good that we can help out the community and we can be part of it in different ways.

Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

You'll find that many of us are setting on or participating in nonprofit boards, uh, or other organizations. Um, elementary school boards. You know, civic engagement is very important, uh, for us. Even our employees will be involved, and we stand behind their involvement in community organizations. Uh, again, be it anything from neighborhood or elementary school, uh, foundations, uh, you know, all the way up through, bigger charitable organizations, uh, in this town.

***Brewery personnel are local minded and partners of the community***

Participants emphasized being local minded as an important aspect of their business model. Not only was being part of the community an important aspect for them but so was using local products and partnering with local artists and businesses. Several participants expressed the importance of being a community partner and supporting their local community in any way they

could. Karleen, a taproom manager, said, “We do pride ourselves on being local with a lot of things. You know, using local businesses and local artists for promotional items that we get.”

Emily, a taproom manager, said, “We definitely use local stuff whenever possible. Um, but a lot of that product isn't really local, the stuff we use in beer, but when it is available, we definitely

use that.” Gavin, a brewery owner, said, “We go local, but we go also wherever we need for high quality, and I would say stewardship of the growth of the product.” Finn, a brewery owner, said,

“But beyond all that, it's just, it's good practice as you say, to be part of the community.” Clay, a brewery owner said:

We've kind of gone back to this sort of European mentality of living in the sense of you've got your local brewery, you've got your local baker. It's very community oriented and people want to support their local people so the local businesses need to then in turn support those people. So, we try to source as much locally as we can when it comes to packaging material and so on.

Clay also said:

Um, also, one thing that's been important to us from early on as being good partners in the community. So, trying to make a positive impact in our community and what we can do through service on a board or charity work or different events that we can kind of help promote different organizations doing that. It's always kinda been one of our pillars of what we do and being good partners of the community.

Brock, a brewery owner, said:

I think it's the coolest thing in the world to be able to do what we get to do every day and that's making amazing product out of local grain. So, we want to be part of that and hopefully lead the charge to get more things, even more locally grown possible.

### ***Brewery personnel are socially responsible***

Social responsibility emerged as a theme after participants discussed the importance of enjoying their product responsibly and the responsibility of balancing revitalization with

gentrification. Hadley, a brewery owner, said, “We just promote the responsible enjoyment and the cultural aspect of it.” Clay, a brewery owner said:

The craft industry is definitely an industry of quality over quantity. So, we're not out promoting binge drinking or anything like that. In fact, the opposite. We want people to enjoy and enjoy responsibly, and we feel that responsibility then carries over to our being partners in the community and making a positive impact.

Finn, a brewery owner, said:

Too often people kind of look at alcohol as this dangerous demon we've got to protect the kids from. I don't think there's any reason why we should demonize it or hide it away. They'll start to realize that there's maybe a culture to it, but it's not something to be feared. And those kids get to grow up and see, “hey, mom and dad are responsibly enjoying their beer, and we get to have a fun event” as opposed to “I'm 21; I can drink now. Let's go get really drunk.” And that's not what we want and that's not what it is. It's a very cultural thing.

Finn also said:

We're very conscious of the fact that as a city gentrifies, all it usually does is push the less fortunate population, and the lower income neighborhoods further, further out of town. So, we are mindful of that. The last couple years we've done coat drives and warm clothing drives for the mission when winter rolls in.

***Brewery personnel believe in leaving communities and neighborhoods better than they found it***

This theme emerged when participants expressed the opportunity they have as business owners to team together to improve their communities and make a positive impact. Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

I think that we've got a cool opportunity here where we've got so many breweries in a close radius that we have a really cool opportunity to all kind of work collectively together to do some of the community stuff.

Clay, a brewery owner, said:

I think that we can make a positive difference. I've got this idea that a lot of the other guys are on board with, an idea that we can all kind of work together to maybe pick a project and see it through and go spend a couple hours doing good together and come back to whoever's hosting brewery and have a beer and do it again the next quarter.

Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

Uh, we want to whether it's the industry, the community, or uh, the nonprofits we're involved in, you know, we want to leave it better than we found it for a better future for our kids and the people around us. That might sound cheesy, but honestly, that's what drives us. And that's not a PR thing.

**RQ4: How does the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and their respective community members and community?**

Participants were asked how community members have reacted to the brewery opening, whether they had heard compliments or complaints, if any cultural beliefs had caused pushback, and how the community members have responded to their community participation. These questions were asked to gain an understanding of how the brewery personnel perceived the relationship between the brewery and community members. The following themes emerged from the interview responses: breweries have been positively received, brewery personnel feel gratitude from community members, and Oklahomans take pride in Oklahoma made products, and breweries have made an economic impact.

***Breweries have been positively received by community members***

When participants were asked about the community members' responses to the brewery personal being engaged in community events and the attendance of brewery events, their responses indicated community members' approval for the brewery being in town. Hadley, a brewery owner, said:

Breweries for the most part are seen as, a net positive I think, in our community here, because of the outreach we do and because we're making a craft product that is more generally consumed for the most part responsibly.

Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

When we do something in the community the response is always positive. It's never, it's never been a negative whatsoever. I mean, like I was saying earlier, we are in the Bible Belt, but when we do these events, we don't get any pushback whatsoever. And so, it's been a, it's been nothing but positive.

Clay, a brewery owner, said:

I think they see that we're going to be community involved and community focused, and we just want to leave the place better than we found it. Whether it's the beer industry, whether it's [town] or just the corner block that we happened to brew on.

#### ***Brewery personnel feel gratitude from community members***

When participants answered questions regarding the community members' reactions, they mentioned people thanking them for opening the brewery and for what the brewery personnel have done for the community. Gavin, a brewery owner, said, "Um, I would say people appreciate us. Every time we do these events, you know more and more people come up and thank our brewery and the place our brewery holds for the city and what it means." Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

Um, we didn't know how the community would act. Um, but we get people all the time that tell [other owner] and I personally, thank you. Like we appreciate you coming to [town]. Like we needed this so bad, and it's weird. It's just we didn't expect that side of it. You might expect people to like say, I really like your beer, you guys make great beer, which we get that all the time too. Um, but we didn't expect an appreciation or a thank you for bringing it here. So, I don't know that it could have gone any better.

Karleen, a taproom manager, said:

I think the community really engages in [brewery] and really loves the brewery. I think it's been great. Our city leaders thank us for what we do in the community, and a lot of different nonprofit organizations always thank us and they're thankful for the donations we give to their organizations.

### ***Oklahomans take pride in Oklahoma made products***

The theme, Oklahomans take pride in Oklahoma made products emerged after participants explained the mentality they felt their customers and Oklahomans had regarding local businesses and Oklahoma made products. Isaac, a taproom manager, said, “Um, I think Oklahomans really love local businesses and Oklahoma stuff. So, anything that's gonna drive more people to the state, I think people are gonna like.” Dalton, a brewery owner, said, “Um, more than anything continuing to make really high-quality products that are local is our goal. Isaac, a taproom manager, said. “Um, I think Oklahomans are really true to their identity and take their identity very seriously. We want to represent that well.”

### ***Breweries have made an economic impact***

Participants mentioned the economic impacts the craft brewery industry has made on communities with breweries through the increase of manufacturing jobs and the increase of tourism. One participant said they had received an award from a state agency for their effect on the economy and essentially creating an industry in Oklahoma. I cannot be more specific because of identification concerns. Hadley, a brewery owner, said, “The craft brewing brought manufacturing jobs back to main street.” Josephine, a marketing director, mentioned the impact breweries have on tourism. She said:

I think people are willing to travel to get to a brewery a lot of the time, um, rather than just like a restaurant or something. Um, something about the manufacturing, I think intrigues people, but breweries get people to visit different parts of towns.

**RQ5: How does the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments?**

To understand how brewery personnel perceive the relationship between other brewery personnel and other local establishments, participants were asked whom they saw as competitors and if they got along with one another. Participants were asked how they interacted with other brewery personnel from other breweries and if they thought interactions would change over time as more breweries open in Oklahoma. From interview responses, the following themes emerged: rising tides floats all boats, the competition between craft breweries and macro-breweries resemble David vs. Goliath, brewers with more experience mentor new brewers, breweries borrow sugar from their neighbors, and interaction between Oklahoma breweries resembles friendship.

***Rising tides floats all boats***

When participants explained the competition between Oklahoma craft breweries, the idea of promoting craft first and the theme rising tides floats all boats emerged. Brewery personnel expressed the belief that what was good for one brewery was good for all of the breweries in Oklahoma. Clay, a brewery owner, said, “In the grand scheme of things, I think you’ll find for the most part this industry promotes craft first.” Clay, also said:

It's obviously the whole adage of the rising tide floats all boats. But I think more than anything, it's continuing to build that culture. If you have people out there doing things the wrong way, if you have people out there making bad beer as we're trying to gain more craft drinkers, as the industry continues to grow, it doesn't benefit anybody if people are doing things the wrong way. So, I think the more that we can kind of work together, the more we can share that information to help raise everybody's game, then the better it is for everyone and for the drinker too.

Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

An analogy that another brewer in the state used to always say was rising tide floats all boats, and so we're all the boats. And so, if another brewery comes along, and they produce really good beer, and let's say you're a Bud Light drinker, and they convert you to craft beer, craft beer drinkers are not loyal to just one brewery. Usually they're loyal to craft, and so they want to go try new things.

Josephine, a marketing director, said:

The more people drinking craft beer, the better. I like to think of it as like a collective community that the more people making craft beer, the more people are drinking craft beer and the better we're all going to do them.

Gavin, a brewery owner, said:

I mean, obviously, you can say any local brewery is a competitor. Um, I don't really feel that way just because the only reason that people, more people are drinking craft beer now is because of the exposure of all the breweries.

***The competition between craft breweries and macro-breweries resemble David vs. Goliath***

When participants explained who they saw as competition the theme the competition between craft breweries and macro-breweries resemble David vs. Goliath emerged. Participants explained they felt their competition was the macro breweries instead of craft breweries. Macro-breweries are national or international breweries that mass produce and distribute beer in large quantities (Brewers Association, 2020). Finn, a brewery owner, said, "So, it's definitely more about fighting against the big guys than it is fighting amongst ourselves." Brock, a brewery owner, said:

Um, I would say that no Oklahoma brewery is our competitor. I would say the big two breweries, um, in the United States, the macro breweries, the ones that are not defined by the Brewer's Association as craft breweries are our competitors.



### ***Brewers with more experience mentor new brewers***

When participants explained how they interacted with other craft breweries the theme, brewers with more experience mentor new brewers emerged. Participants explained they shared information and helped other craft breweries to ensure the success of the industry. Participants have brewed in collaboration with each other to show support of one another. Brock, a brewery owner, said, “We all want to help each other for the most part. So, there is a good kind of family thing, I believe. And I'm still kind of learning that and getting involved with all of that.” Hadley, a brewery owner, said, “I think the more that we can kind of work together, the more we can share that information to help raise everybody's game, then that's the better it is for everyone.”

Clay, a brewery owner, said:

We've definitely had a lot of people come to us with questions and starting up and kind of pick our brain and we're happy to share. Um, I think that by and large you'll find in this industry that people are very willing to share issues they've had or problems they've had.

Josephine, a marketing director, said:

We do collaborations and put each other's names on it. I mean why not, right? The more like creative minds, the better. Um, it's just one of those things I think in the industry that's fun to do. It's like showing your support. Sometimes it's maybe a smaller brewery and you want to give them like some of your light if you have a bigger following or whatever.

Dalton, a brewery owner, said:

It's a cool community. When we first got into the industry, we thought other breweries might look at us as just straight competition, and they wouldn't give us advice, or they wouldn't give us help. Um, and that's not the case at all. They have actually been nothing but helpful to us. They've answered our questions, they pointed us in the right direction, and it was so refreshing when we kind of figured that out 'cause we didn't think it was going to be that way. I mean if you get into any other industry and you're trying to steal

sales, what we thought we were trying to compete for shelf space and tap handle space, and these guys are actually helping us out. It made no sense to us at first. But then you get into the industry and you realize that the mentality and the mindset is promoting craft first. It's refreshing. It's really neat. I hope it stays that way.

One participant mentioned the relationships between breweries was not collaborative, which differed from the other brewery personnel' opinions. Josephine, a marketing director, said:

I don't know if it's like an Oklahoma, like Sooner mentality thing, but like there was like every man for themselves. And even over the last two years, I've seen a lot of that kind of change as more people pop up. It's like there's never just going to be like one brewery.

Like it's just not going to happen. I mean, look how many restaurants there are. It is very similar, I think. Um, so yeah, I think as, as more as like this community continues to grow and the [area] continues to grow, um, I think the interactions will definitely change and hopefully, I mean, I, I'm not saying that they're negative right now, but hopefully for the better, hopefully it's just more interaction with each other.

### ***Breweries borrow sugar from their neighbors***

When participants answered questions regarding their interactions and relationships with other brewery personnel, the theme brewers borrow sugar from their neighbors emerged. Participants explained how they will borrow ingredients from other craft breweries if they are low on certain ingredients on brew days. Participants explained sharing ingredients and buying orders together to save on shipping costs. Gavin, a brewery owner, said, "Um, we all, I mean I hook people up with grains and hops all the time. I mean I gave our house yeast to [local brewery]. I try to help as much as I can." Austin, a brewery owner, said, "We interact all the time with breweries down in [town and town], primarily those two [locations] through sharing ideas and equipment." Josephine, a marketing director, said:

We exchange ingredients and things people need. Sometimes people need hops or a bag of grain or black gloves, whatever it is, keg caps. We've done that with a bunch of people.

Um, [local brewery] before they opened, we were contract brewing their beer here for a while. So, we like had tanks here and our brewers brewed the beer for him for a little bit while they got up and running at their spot. So yeah, we're all always trying to help out.

Finn, a brewery owner, said:

[Local brewers] will call me sometimes and say, "I'm buying this piece of equipment. If I buy two more, I can get free shipping. Are you in?" So, I'll say, "Yeah grab me two."

Then when I'm buying stuff I'll say, "Hey I've already got a pallet" So, if I'm paying for a pallet already, I ask, "Do you want in on the pallet? I've got space." So, effectively you know you can get stuff cheaper, you know save on shipping and take advantage of bulk ordering. So, it's just scratching each other's backs. If we do a grain inventory before a brew day and realize we're one bag short of something special, you know, we just call the brewery next door. "Can I borrow a bag of wheat?" It's just what we do. It's like borrowing sugar from your neighbor. It's like, "I need two bags of wheat. My truck comes in two days from now, but I need to brew tomorrow." It's just what we do.

### ***Interaction between Oklahoma breweries resembles friendship***

When participants answered questions regarding their relationships with other brewery personnel, the theme interaction between Oklahoma breweries resembles friendship emerged. Participants explained they thought of other craft brewery personnel as their friends. Gavin, a brewery owner, said, "Um, but I would say 95% of the breweries here in [local area] I'm friends, if not close friends with the people that run them. Brock, a brewery owner, said, "In this industry, I feel like it's more of two artists looking at two different paintings that each other have done."

Finn, a brewery owner, said:

It's a very close knit and friendly industry for sure. Certainly, we have been well supported both by our, what you would normally consider competitors because again, we're not really competing with each other the same way that you might see that in some industries. Beyond all that, most of us are friends. Um, and so we'll check in with each

other. We generally all follow each other on social media so we can see what events other ones are planning. We'll do collaborations with each other from time to time.

Josephine, a marketing directory, said:

We started having barbecues because we want everyone to hang out and we want to get to know everyone, we want to hear what you're doing, we want to hear about your family, your kids, whatever. Like just, if you're not taking advantage of that opportunity to like create a community, I mean, I don't know what you're doing.

Blaine, a brewery owner, said:

We communicate, we drink together, and we do the festivals together. There's generally going to be catching up at the festivals too. Um, like [brewery] across the road, when they were doing construction, they'd be in here at the end of each day just having a drink afterwards. So, you know, we all build a rapport.

Clay, a brewery owner, said:

I mean at the end of the day, this is a craft industry, so you've got people who are passionate about what they do and so we're all beer lovers first and business owners second probably. So, in saying that we definitely have good relationships with other breweries.

## **Conclusions & Implications**

### **RQ1: How do breweries establish salience with the respective community?**

Participants were asked questions regarding their overall view of the brewery, what role they thought the brewery has within the community, if products had names relating to local ties, where the brewery supplies were sourced, what makes the brewery different than other local establishments, and if they believed the brewery served as a third space location for community members. The major themes for this research question included brewery personnel want to be a business the community is proud of, brewery personnel believe they can lead by example,

brewery personnel contribute to community cultural revival, breweries function as a community gathering place or neighborhood living room, and breweries sell an experience as well as beer.

Participants said they wanted to make a local beer that is part of the heritage of the community and something community members could have a sense of ownership in. Brewery personnel also mentioned the breweries being businesses community members are proud of as an important factor to them. These findings show these Oklahoma craft breweries foster a closeness with community members through creating a local product, which supports Schnell and Reese's (2003) findings. Participants said they thought they were able to lead the effort of creating a community being a business that represents Oklahoma well and through their events. These Oklahoma craft breweries focus on creating a place where people can connect. This finding relates to Tuan's (1991) suggestion that place is created when people get to know it better and associate value with a space or business.

The local culture of breweries community is something brewery personnel participants said they wanted to positively impact and enhance the local culture of their communities in a meaningful way, which supports Fournier's (1998) idea of a brand relationship being related to the meaningful actions of the brand and its consumers mutual benefit. Findings indicated craft breweries are establishments that benefit their local communities through local engagements and partnerships, which creates a sense of belonging like Schnell and Resse (2014) suggested. Participants expressed the importance of responsibly contributing to community development in terms of culture revival and promoting the local economy. Participants indicated the craft breweries they are affiliated with served as places for people in the community to connect with each other, which relates to Hickey's (2012) idea of a third space location being a living room for the society at large. Participants said the breweries sell an experience along with beer, and being a craft brewery meant the brewery and its personnel were creative and innovative. These factors help enhance the experiences of craft brewery customers and relates to internal saliency, which is created through consumer usage and experience (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Participants said

they wanted to make innovative, high-quality beers for consumers to enjoy. By being creative and innovative, craft brewery personnel provide opportunities for consumers to try products they may have never seen or tried before. These craft breweries create differentiation through innovative products, which helps their businesses stand apart from competitors (Keller, 1998).

**RQ2: How do brewery personnel differentiate the brewery and their products?**

Themes associated with this research question were: word-of-mouth is a promotion factor, peer promotion promotes breweries, brewery events are used for promotion, and place branding is a branding technique for breweries. Most breweries in this study indicated the importance of being creative and innovative in both products and branding (McQuiston, 2013). The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study used place branding such as early industries, town founders, town heritage, seasons and harvest cycles, and local heroes to name products (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2014). The craft brewery personnel in this study said they use local ties to name some of their beers, especially their flagship beers.

Participants said other breweries play a major role in attracting customers to try their beer and visit their taprooms, which helps them expand their market and relates to Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital being social relations. Word-of-mouth was one of the biggest factors of spreading the brand of the brewery along with engaging, participating, and hosting event, which is important given that word-of-mouth recommendations are important for millennials (Granase, 2012; McCluskey & Shreay, 2011). Participants also mentioned using events, tastings, and local or regional festivals to promote their products and reach consumers (Fountain et al., 2008; Francioni & Byrd, 2012; McQuiston, 2013).

**RQ3: How do brewery personnel create, participate, and interact with community-based events representing the brewery?**

The themes for this research question were the following: brewery personnel are civically engaged, brewery personnel are local minded and partners of the community, brewery personnel are socially responsible, and brewery personnel believe in leaving communities and

neighborhoods better than they found it. Being civically involved is important because it leads to success for craft breweries (Gatrell et al., 2019). The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study participate in special releases, charity nights, and community events to promote their brands as McQuiston (2013) suggested to successfully promote craft breweries. Often the Oklahoma craft brewery owners or employees in this study ingrain themselves in the community by serving on community boards or being members of community organizations, which helps the breweries build relationships (Fournier, 1998).

Participants emphasized being locally minded as an important aspect of their business model. Not only was being part of the community an important aspect for them but so was using local products and partnering with local artists and businesses. These Oklahoma craft breweries forge relationships with their communities. This finding relates to Shortridge's (1996) concept of neolocalism, which is the conscious attempt to foster a relationship with local ties, supporting local economies, and reconnecting with places.

Social responsibility emerged as a theme after participants discussed the importance of enjoying their product responsibly and the responsibility of balancing revitalization with gentrification. These craft breweries in Oklahoma have immersed themselves in social responsibilities, which is important because values are the core of a culture (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study have the opportunity as business owners to team together to improve their communities and shape practices. This finding relates to Said's (2019) suggestion that coopetition can shape practices such as community engagement.

**RQ4: How do the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and their respective community members?**

In summarizing how brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and the respective community, participants indicated the craft breweries have been well received. The themes relating to this research question were breweries have been positively received, brewery personnel feel gratitude from community members, Oklahomans take pride in Oklahoma

made products, and these breweries have made an economic impact. The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study are using neolocalism to actively attempt to resurrect the feeling of community through building relationships and new connections with the places they are located as well as a sense of place (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014). Participants said the community members' responses to the brewery personal being engaged in community events have been positive. It is important for these Oklahoma craft breweries to build brand loyalty with consumers and forging a relationship through connection to the local community helps foster brand loyalty (Taylor et al., 2020). Participants said city leaders have thanked them for their contributions to the community. This shows these Oklahoma craft breweries have developed an attachment through their relationships and reputation as Fournier (1998) suggested.

The theme that Oklahomans take pride in Oklahoma made products emerged after participants explained the mentality they felt their customers and Oklahomans in general have regarding local businesses and Oklahoma made products. Participants said Oklahomans are true to their identity. These craft breweries have made an effort to represent the identity of Oklahomans well. This finding relates to the idea of using local history, landscape, and culture to forge a local identity (Taylor et al., 2020).

**RQ5: How does the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments?**

The themes associated with this research question were rising tides floats all boats, the competition between craft breweries and macro-breweries resemble David vs. Goliath, brewers with more experience mentor new brewers, breweries borrow sugar from their neighbors, and interaction between Oklahoma breweries resembles friendship. In summarizing how brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments, including other craft breweries, an overarching characteristic of social capital (Scott, 2017) emerged through the five themes. When participants explained the competition between Oklahoma craft breweries, the idea of promoting craft first and the theme rising tides floats all boats emerged.



Brewery personnel expressed the belief what was good for one brewery was good for all of the breweries in Oklahoma. They expressed the importance of building the craft culture by helping everyone raise their game to produce higher quality products and ensure the odds of more people drinking craft beer (Mathias et al., 2017). This is important because Chen and Miller (2012) and Mathias et al. (2017) mentioned the more people drinking craft beer will legitimize the market. Oklahoma craft breweries band together and see macro-breweries such as MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch as their competition. Working together helps ensure a better market position (Mathias et al., 2017). Participants expressed the notion breweries benefitted from interactions with each other. They suggested other craft breweries were not their competition, and they suggested craft breweries were part of an industry community, which competes against macro-breweries instead of one another. These findings all support the concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993; Scott, 2017). Participants recognized the mutual benefits of helping one another out (Mathias et al., 2017). These Oklahoma craft breweries support each other through collaborations and share helpful information (Domínguez & Arford, 2010).

Sharing information helps each other and is important because it helps ensure the success of the industry (Chen & Miller, 2012; Mathias et al., 2017). Participants mentioned craft breweries with more experience have helped mentor them by answering their questions, collaborating, and pointing them in the right direction (Marchak 2015; Said, 2019). The interactions between Oklahoma craft breweries resembles a relationship, which is what Domínguez and Arford (2010) proposed was the fundamental aspect of social capital.

Participants explained they will borrow ingredients from other craft breweries if they are low on certain ingredients on brew days. Sharing resources with other craft breweries, who could be seen as competition, demonstrates the theory of coopetition (Said, 2019). Participants explained they will exchange ingredients with other breweries, and order shipments together to save money on shipping costs. This kind of relationship ultimately helps the breweries succeed and represents Bourdieu's (1998) concept of social capital being a social relation that helps

advance people or businesses. The relationships between Oklahoma craft breweries resembles a friendship with trust, which is important because the fundamental aspects of social capital are relationships and trust (Domínguez & Arford, 2010).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research contributes to the understandings of how craft breweries establish their brand with respect to their communities, but further research is needed. Oklahoma has a relatively new craft brewery industry. It would be valuable to study other states that have more established brewery industries because findings may differ. Studying the craft brewery industry community would also be valuable to understand how the industry builds community with one another across state lines.

Craft breweries are locally produced, but their products can be distributed throughout the state and across state lines. Due to distribution, it would be valuable to gain consumer perspectives of craft beer once it is sold beyond its locality. The perspective of craft brewery customers would also be valuable to provide another perspective on breweries within communities to understand how breweries establish their brand.

Fournier (1998) suggested brands can have personalities. This study used sense of place as framework to examine how craft breweries establish their brand in their respective communities. The results from this study indicate sense of place creates human attachments to location and businesses. This research indicates craft breweries that connect emotionally and personally with their customers will likely have more success creating a brand narrative around sense of place. Research beyond craft breweries such as craft fairs and food production and consumption where consumers are gravitating towards local movements may provide further insight into sense of place as a brand strategy.

This study demonstrated craft breweries in Oklahoma are an important venue where place is experienced, and social capital is shared. Craft breweries offer communities a place where community members can gather. Social capital should be used as a framework for assessing other

agricultural businesses and organizations. Further exploration of social capital's application for other agricultural organizations in the broad scope of agriculture would be valuable.

### **Practical Recommendations**

This research demonstrated these Oklahoma craft breweries serve as a third space location for consumers, which leads to shared social capital. Craft brewery owners should be aware of the important role they play as a third space. Third space locations are important because they serve and unite communities (Oldenburg, 1999), and social capital is important because it aides in the ability of individuals to advance their interests through connections and relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). City leaders should also be aware of the role craft breweries play as a location where connections and a sense of place are fostered.

This research revealed these Oklahoma craft brewers could forge an attachment between their brewery and their communities through community engagement activities. On this basis craft breweries should attempt to create events and participate in community events to create an attachment. Partnering with other local businesses is also a good way for breweries to engage in their communities. This is important because the success of a craft brewery can be linked to the success of their community.

This research provided further insight in how Oklahoma craft breweries interact with one another. Craft breweries should recognize the mutual benefits of working together as an industry. Coopetition can increase their overall market share and can help legitimize the craft brewery industry in Oklahoma.

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## CHAPTER IV

### MANUSCRIPT TWO

#### **Introduction**

A craft brewery is a small, independent business rooted in tradition (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). A craft brewery produces less than 6 million barrels per year and less than 25% of the brewery can be owned or controlled by a non-craft brewer (Watson, 2015b). Most craft brewers originate their flavor from traditional and innovative brewing ingredients (Fletcher, 2016). The unique character of craft beer and the demand for product differentiation explains the popularity of craft beer, consumers growing preferences outside of macro breweries such as Anheuser-Busch and the trend of neolocalism (Baginski & Bell, 2011). Neolocalism is best described as the intentional attempt to obtain local attachment (Shortridge, 1996).

Since 2011, the number of craft breweries in Oklahoma has grown more than five times (Brewers Association, 2019). In 2011, there were fewer than 10 breweries in Oklahoma, whereas today, Oklahoma is home to 55 craft breweries with more in planning (Brewers Association, 2019). Oklahoma's recent craft brewery growth can be tied to recent law changes (Roach, 2016). Oklahoma was considered a dry state when it was first granted statehood in 1907, and beer laws remained relatively restrictive compared to other states (Roach, 2016). In 2016, the Oklahoma electorate approved State Question 792 and Senate Bill 424, which led to the modernization of Oklahoma's alcohol laws (Barker, 2018). The passage of State Question 792 allowed convenience stores and grocery stores to sell high-point beer, beer over 3.2% alcohol by volume (ABW), and the passage of Oklahoma Senate Bill 424 allowed breweries to sell full-strength beer

directly to customers (Morgan, 2018; Perry, 2016). The law changes motivated breweries to open on premise taprooms (Holcomb et al., 2018).

The growth of craft breweries in Oklahoma reflects the general trends of craft brewery growth in the United States. Since the 1980s the number of craft breweries in the United States has increased (Gatrell et al., 2018). Now, more than 80% of legal drinking age adults have a brewery to go to within 10 miles of their home (Watson, 2015a). The general beer sales in the United States has experienced a decline in sales by volume, whereas the craft brewery industry has grown by 4% in volume (Watson et al., 2020).

The craft beer industry has outperformed the large breweries on percentage growth and margins since 2006 (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011) and continues to grow as the creation of new beer and styles continues to influence new product and new business entries (Holcomb et al., 2018). The craft brewery industry accounts for more than 24% of the \$114.2 billion U.S. beer market (Watson et al., 2019). In 2018 Oklahoma craft breweries produced 79,747 barrels of craft beer and made a \$646 million economic impact (Brewers Association, 2019).

One of main factors that allows craft breweries to stand out against large brewers like MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch is their focus on differentiation, which is what sets a brand apart from other brands (Chew, 2016; Keller, 1998). According to Tremblay and Tremblay (2011) craft breweries have grown due to a localized response, an increase in demand due to changing tastes and preferences, and the popularization of local beer (Holcomb et al., 2018). The appeal of the craft beer industry can be correlated to the higher perceived economic value consumers get from the experience of drinking craft beer (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011).

A large share of the growing demand for craft beer can be credited to the millennial cohort (Fromm, 2014). Craft breweries tend to appeal to the type of customers who seek new tastes and experiences (Kleban & Nickerson, 2011). This generation has been credited as one of the largest consumer groups leading the movement toward more local and craft products (Reid et al., 2014).



Craft breweries tend to be involved in product donations, volunteerism, corporate social responsibility programs, sponsorships, community events, and philanthropies (Brewers Association, 2019). They are “generally presented as entrepreneurial and creative” (Hede & Watne, 2013, para. 23). This fits with the values of the millennial cohort, who prefer products and companies who reflect their values (McCluskey & Shreay, 2011). Millennials are often described as self-expressive and open to trying new products or experiences (Pew Research Center, 2010). Millennials tend to prefer to spend money at socially responsible companies (Carter, 2016), and craft breweries make efforts to be socially responsible and practice sustainability (Sprengeler, 2016).

Recommendations from friends or online reviews for purchase decisions are more likely to influence this market segment (McCluskey & Shreay, 2011). Millennial craft beer drinkers are five times more likely to be influenced by recommendations of friends and word-of-mouth advertising than traditional, and 70% followed their favorite craft brewery and brands on social media (Granese, 2012). Craft breweries demonstrate these values, creativity, tradition, and social responsibility that draw in niche, community-driven markets and resonates with millennials (Gatrell et al., 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework & Literature Review**

According to Franzen and Moriarty (2009) a brand is a complex combination of consumers reactions and management systems. Brands identify products, build awareness, and create meaning (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Branding can influence consumers in multiple ways. The strength of a brand can be correlated to its saliency. Saliency influences consumers’ choices and purchasing behaviors (Ehrenberg et al., 1997). Saliency can be split into external (i.e., presence of a brand in a consumer’s surroundings) and internal (i.e., the accessibility of a brand in memory) factors (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). “Brand managers believe they ‘own’ a brand, but a brand is a perception that lives primarily in the mind of the customer” (Franzen & Moriarty,

2009, p. 7). Consumer experiences and usage affects internal saliency (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

To establish internal and external saliency, businesses use differentiation to make their brand more memorable (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). To achieve differentiation a brand needs points of difference from other brands and parity so the brand is included within the general category of those other brands (Iyer & Muncy, 2005; Keller, 1998; Webster & Keller, 2004). A brand image and reputation creates differentiation (Mudambi, 2002).

Social factors and cultural factors are very important to brand strategy development as well as consumers' brand perceptions (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). "Since values are the core of culture, research on cultural values is particularly important to brands that seek to immerse themselves in an appropriate value system," (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 35). Brands have relationships, personalities, and reputations and the quality of the brand relationships is correlated with the meaningful actions of the brand and the consumers mutual benefit (Evans et al., 2002; Fournier, 1998). People develop attachments and relationships with brands through satisfaction and trust for the brand (Fournier, 1998).

Massey (1994) described place as a meeting place where a cluster of social relations and meetings weave together at a location. A sense of place makes people care about their physical surroundings, creates community attachments, builds relationships, and adds value to a place, which explains why it makes people feel like they belong (Hummon, 1992; Marcu, 2012; Tuan, 1991). A sense of place is a combination of visual, social, cultural, and environmental characteristics and qualities that make communities different from one another (Hummon, 1992). Sense of place can help reinforce emotional attachments between consumers and brands (Hede & Watne, 2013). The conscious effort to foster a sense of place based on community identity is neolocalism (Holtkamp et al., 2016). Neolocalism is a deliberate attempt at creating a relationship with local ties, reconnecting with places, and supporting local economies (Shortridge, 1996). The

idea of boasting local economies by spending money at the brewery or on local beer through distribution channels is appealing to consumers (Taylor et al., 2020).

The attempt to create a sense of place and utilizing place branding has increased the popularity of craft breweries (Flack, 1997). Place branding is the concept of regions, cities, and communities being branded (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). Schnell and Reese (2014) identified place branding as trend used by craft breweries to create a sense of belonging and community. Craft breweries often use the local history, landscape, and culture through the names of their beers, label design, logo, and even the name of the brewery (Taylor et al., 2020), which helps craft breweries ingrain themselves into the local community. Examples of place attachment, neolocalism, and place-brand would be the names of breweries as well as the names of the beers the breweries sell (Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014).

Successful craft beer marketing stems from marketing strategies that focus on local attachments and the quality of their products (McQuiston, 2013). Creating a design and product consumers notice and can relate to is important for craft brewery marketing (Lahnalampi, 2016). Being on tap in local bars and restaurants is another way craft breweries can market and distribute their products, expand their customer base, and forge local ties (Lahnalampi, 2016; McQuiston, 2013). Events and entertainment options can strengthen brewery brands and create word-of-mouth opportunities (Francioni & Byrd, 2012; Fountain et. al., 2008). Word-of-mouth marketing is a naturally occurring phenomenon of person-to-person communications between people about a product, service, or brand (Nyilasy, 2006). Word-of-mouth can lead to positive or negative effects of a brand (Kolter & Armstrong, 2016). Being part of the neighborhood allows craft breweries to build trust with the residents and helps breweries share their stories (Notte, 2016).

Craft breweries are an essential element for communities through creating a unique social value for communities and as a presence of a third space location (Mifsud, 2018). Hickey (2012) described third spaces as the places where people go when they are not at home (the first space) or at work (the second space). Third spaces are like where people are neither family or employees

but are locations where people share interests, values, and build connections by mingling (Hickey, 2012). Third space locations are hangout locations such as cafes, bookstores, hair salons, coffee shops, craft breweries, and other locations, which serve a community best when they are local and inclusive (Oldenburg, 1999).

Social capital, which consists of social relations that have the ability or can increase the ability of a person to advance their interests (Bourdieu, 1986), is related to this third space concept. Social capital has three components: moral obligations and norms, such as reciprocity or mutual assistance; social values, such as trust; and social networks, like volunteer organizations (Putnam, 1993). When community members interact with one another, social capital is built (Scott, 2017). Domínguez and Arford (2010) said the fundamental aspect of social capital involves relationships and trust, and they suggested social capital includes positive effects such as support and helpful information. Social capital is the networks of relationships between people, which allows society to function efficiently (Putnam, 2000). Alcohol is linked to endorphin release, which plays an important role in social bonding in people (Machin & Dunbar, 2011). Moderate alcohol consumption, especially in relaxed social environments such as craft breweries, increases psychological wellbeing and can promote large-scale close personal bonds through storytelling, laughter, singing, and dancing (Dunbar et al., 2016).

Coopetition is the binary relationship that emerges when businesses simultaneously cooperate in activities such as strategic alliance and compete against each other for sales etc. (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). Access to shared knowledge is one of the benefits of coopetition (Mathias et al., 2017). Coopetition explains how belonging to a place or community can increase innovation, identity, and shape practices (Said, 2019). This type of relationship emerges when competitors are better off helping each other to help ensure higher quality products and an impact on their market position against a larger organization (Mathias et al., 2017). Coopetition can build an emergent market and can legitimize a category or industry (Mathias et al., 2017; Chen &

Miller, 2012). Studies show the craft brewery industry is an example of sustained coopetition and resembles craft brewers' collective identity (Said, 2019).

### **Purpose & Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to understand how key community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities. The following research questions guided the second manuscript:

- RQ1: How has the brewery affected the community?
- RQ2: How have community members reacted to the brewery?
- RQ3: How do community members believe brewery personnel engage and interact with the community?
- RQ4: What role do community members see the breweries having within their community?
- RQ5: What do community members perceive as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities?

### **Methods**

For this study, key community stakeholders from communities with breweries were interviewed using a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is used to interpret a situation in terms of the meaning people bring to them by studying a phenomenon in its natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A qualitative approach was important for this study to understand the different perspectives of community stakeholders.

Four communities in Oklahoma were represented to encompass a variety of community sizes and locations. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used in this study to select participants (Creswell, 2007). Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to address different aspects of the study (Creswell, 2007). Snowball sampling is often used once a researcher breaks into a population because it identifies participants from people who know

participants who are information-rich (Creswell, 2007). A recruitment email was used to recruit participants. Email addresses were obtained from business or company websites, social media platforms, and other interviewees.

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews because the “interviewed subjects’ viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or a questionnaire” (Flick, 2018 p. 216). Using semi-structured interviews allowed for the questions on the interview guide to be asked in a flexible order best suited for each interviewee to gain the perspectives of the community stakeholders. To help develop the questions for the interview guide, I met separately with two different knowledgeable community stakeholders for pre-interviews. The feedback from the pre-interviews was used to develop the interview guide. After the interview guide was developed, feedback received from Laura Greenhaw, an agricultural leadership faculty member at the University of Florida, Quisto Settle, chair of the thesis committee, and Audrey E. H. King, a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University was applied to finalize the interview guides.

The purpose of the study, the time estimated to complete the interview, and the plans for using the results were explained to participants before the interviews began. Participants completed a consent form before the interview began. The phone interviewees signed and emailed their consent forms before their scheduled interviews took place (Creswell, 2007). Introductory questions were utilized to introduce the topic of the interviews. Follow-up questions and probes were executed to gain more in-depth information (Flick, 2018).

The interview guide was made up of seven focus questions with one to four follow-up questions. The focus questions were intended to be research questions asked using everyday language (Hernmanns, 2004). Follow-up questions were used to “stimulate more details or depth at certain points in the interview,” (Flick, 2018 p. 217). Probe questions were utilized as interventions to gain further detail and depth (Flick, 2018). The interview guides asked open-ended, direct questions to gather responses from participants regarding their perspectives relating

to the brewery and its brand within the community. The questions addressed the topics of community member reactions, community member interactions, brand awareness, and the third space concept in relation to craft breweries.

A total of 11 community stakeholders were interviewed through phone and in-person interviews. Three community stakeholder interviewees were able to give a statewide perspective along with the specific town they were from. Four of the interviews were conducted over the phone because some interviewees were unable to meet in-person because of schedule complications and time constraints. The in-person interviews were conducted at each of the interviewees' location choice. Locations included a local bookstore, personal offices, conference rooms, and a communal office sofa.

The participants included a former director of a city development organization, directors of community development organizations, economic development managers, a sales director, a marketing director, a business CEO, a journalist, and an apparel business owner. The interviews began February 27, 2020, and the interviews were completed March 17, 2020. Data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic causing non-essential businesses in 27 counties across Oklahoma to close on Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

After five participants were interviewed, I was not hearing new information, which indicated data saturation occurred (Guest et al., 2006). But to err on the conservative side and ensure wider representation from all communities, 11 community stakeholders were interviewed before data collection was concluded. The interviews ranged from 15 to 60 minutes. Each interview was audio recorded, and I took handwritten notes during each interview. To conclude each interview, I summarized the interview. The interview summaries served as a member check (Flick, 2009). To ensure confidentiality, all identifying information was removed or masked, and each participant was assigned a pseudonym. Data was transcribed verbatim using Temi, a professional transcription service.

Transcripts were cleaned and confirmed. MAXQDA was used to code the interviews, which made coding more organized and served as a tool for transparency (Trochim, 2020). Codes and themes were developed by “describing, classifying, and interpreting” the transcribed interview documents (Creswell, 2007).

A combination of Glaser’s Constant Comparative Method (Glaser, 1965) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) was used to identify themes. Glaser’s (1965) method codes data into themes and thematic analysis is used to report patterns and themes (Flick, 2018). Incidents found in each interview were coded and compared to other incidents (Glaser, 1965). After incidents were compared codes were sorted into various themes and linked through the constant comparisons. For more focused themes, boundaries were set. The boundaries consisted of whether the incident was mentioned in multiple interviews or if someone from each community represented mentioned similar things.

Credibility involves establishing the results of the study are believable (Trochim, 2020). Researchers experienced in qualitative research reviewed the interview guide to help ensure credibility. The verbatim transcripts were compared to the audio recordings and the handwritten notes from each interview to ensure credibility as well (Creswell, 2007). For consistency and confirmability each interview was summarized, and interviewees were asked if the summary was accurate; this served as a member check (Flick, 2018). Descriptions of the interviews, including where the interviews occurred, what they were about, and the impending pandemic was included for transferability measures (Trochim, 2020). Audio recorders and handwritten notes were utilized during data collection to provide an audit trail, which Dr. Settle reviewed for confirmability measures (Flick, 2018). Data triangulation was used to collect data from different locations and populations to help ensure the dependability of the data. (Carter et al., 2014).

I grew up in northeast Colorado, and Colorado has a big craft brewery scene. I studied agribusiness at Kansas State University where I received my undergraduate degree. This background might have affected my interpretations of the data of this study. I have a personal



interest in the craft brewery industry, and I consume craft and macro beer, but I do not have a direct affiliation with any of the Oklahoma craft breweries. Due to the ties to a local product, the agricultural industry, and branding, I found value and importance in the data collection and analysis of this study.

## **Results**

### **RQ1: How has the brewery affected the community environment?**

To understand how community stakeholders perceived the brewery to have affected the culture of their community participants were asked questions pertaining to their town and if they thought the brewery or breweries had changed the culture of the community. The following themes emerged from participants' responses: breweries influence people to slow down and enjoy life, breweries enhance the existing culture, craft beer is viewed as a sociable drink, craft brewers promote social conscious awareness, and craft breweries have helped revitalize neighborhoods and vacant buildings.

#### ***Breweries influence people to slow down and enjoy life***

Participants mentioned the brewery being a place where people can slow down, enjoy life, and other peoples' company. Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said:

It's just, it is a different mindset we're getting back to, I mean sometimes you just see new ways to get back to what people used to do, which is getting together and hanging out. We don't do as much of that as people used to. We're just always in a hurry. We're always on our phones. We always have things to do. So, I think the breweries are helping people slow down and enjoy things a little bit.

Veronica, CEO of a local business, said:

I think they have been another step toward opening up the community to new things. There are a lot of people in every community who say things won't work here, things can't happen here, or they don't like change. But the breweries have been welcomed. I

think they have made people realize we can have that type of nice thing too. I think it is been another step toward opening up our culture in enjoying things again and getting together.

### ***Breweries enhance the existing culture***

When asked if the brewery have changed the culture of the community, participants said breweries have added to the culture. Ryan, a journalist, said:

I think people really appreciate just generally craft anything, authentic coffee roasting, authentic Mexican food, authentic baked goods from [local bakery]. So, I feel like breweries just take it to another level where people really understand it and appreciate the fact that it's local. I think they've enhanced what's there.

Walker, a business development director, said:

I don't know if it's changed the entire culture. I think it's changed our way of thinking and over time changing the way of thinking changes culture. The brewers have a lot passion. I love the passion and the love to participate in something, and you kind of get a little of that yourself from going to breweries. They're all nerds. They want to tell you way more than you want to know about making beer, but I love that.

### ***Craft beer is viewed as a sociable drink***

Participants expressed the belief breweries have shifted the way their community and Oklahomans feel about drinking. Shawn, an apparel business owner, said, "Um, you know, beer is not like liquor. It's more sociable, I think. Um, people are sitting with other people, meeting other people, it's a social thing." Ryan, a journalist, said:

People are there to have conversation and certainly the beer is a draw, but it isn't about just getting inebriated or partying per say. It is really more about community conversation. It's just what our taproom culture has really become I mean it's really just become that low key, fun place to enjoy a good beer and have conversation. I never go to one of the taprooms where I don't end up striking a conversation with somebody else, and

people are generally happy. They're not drinking their sorrows away. They're there to enjoy life and enjoy other people.

Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

Tomorrow we're going to be voting on liquor stores opening on Sunday and I think a lot of that is coming from the breweries being in Oklahoma. Now, drinking is not this shameful thing we do in the privacy of our home. I think breweries really kind of helped that culture, and I think kids will grow up seeing people enjoying drinks responsibly.

***Craft brewers promote social conscious awareness***

Participants described breweries as businesses that are socially conscious and community conscious. Shawn, an apparel business owner, said, "I would say for the most part, um, they're very community conscious." Ryan, a journalist, said:

So many of the breweries here tend to really focus on being socially responsible, um, you know, from sourcing products to recycling their spent grains, that sort of thing. I feel as though that is a pretty natural extension to just the overall ethic of being a craft producer. I think they've done a pretty nice job of that to be good stewards over all the environment. I know that [local brewer] has had an agreement since, practically since the day [he/she] opened [his/her] spent grains go to, cattle ranchers for feed or at least to supplement feed. So yeah, they've been pretty responsible stewards and they all have done a really interesting job I think to of, I don't know exactly how to put it, but I think that it would be easy for the taproom culture maybe to get a little bit out of control as far as being really rowdy, [customers] could get a little bit drunk, you know, that kinda thing. I think they've by and large work together to kind of keep the culture pretty chill. Um, I mean everything from their hours of operation to, you know, policies for serving.

Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

I think we're going to see that as those kids grew up seeing people enjoying drinks responsibly and not having it be like this big thing will teach them to drink responsibly.

Um, I think that having kids in breweries, which was also something that changed in the last couple of years, I don't know exactly when, will show them how to be responsible.

***Craft breweries have helped revitalize neighborhoods and vacant buildings***

When participants were asked if the breweries in their communities has made an economic impact, participants expressed the idea that breweries had helped revitalize the neighborhood through restoring vacant buildings, increasing activity, and increasing property values. Taylor, an executive business director, said, “What they done with the buildings helps the community, [the breweries] look inviting, it’s very nice landscaping, it looks sharp. Even the activity level helps, um it’s something to be proud of.” Penny, a former director of a community development organization, said:

The property values are going up and the property values around the businesses are going up. They're [breweries] adding value to the buildings surrounding them because that's how things get their value. Their value is determined by what is surrounding them. They're increasing value in their businesses and the buildings surrounding them.

Ryan, a journalist said:

I know that property immediately surrounding the area where [local breweries] are has turned over in a positive way. Um, a few other businesses have located there thinking that they're just kind of like just momentum and investment. So, we started to see a lot of vacant properties or underutilized properties being snapped up.

**RQ2: How have community members reacted to brewery?**

To understand how community members have reacted to the brewery, participants were asked questions regarding their opinion of the breweries, how they thought other community members reacted to the brewery, and if they had heard compliments or complaints about the breweries. The following themes emerged from interview responses: community members see breweries as an asset for the community, the more breweries the merrier, and communities have embraced the breweries

### ***Community members see breweries as an asset***

Participants mentioned breweries adding to their communities through being a locally made product and as a business that fit well in their towns and communities. Veronica, CEO of a local business, said, “I think we're fortunate to have a brewery in [town].” Natalie, a sales director, said, “I love the brewery. I think it's a great fit for [town]. It just shows that we can branch out and bring new things in.” Walker, an economic development manager, said, “We have seen a big push in that arena [local product] here lately. Made in Oklahoma. Buy local. Support your local entrepreneur, we have seen a lot of it.” Ryan, a journalist, said:

Having really good, local craft brew is wonderful. I think it's something that really adds to our community. And you know, what's interesting is when the taprooms first opened it was kind of a new experience for [town] to have brewery taprooms. I was amazed at how quickly a culture developed around going to taprooms. It really felt like more like a laid-back coffee shop environment with good beer. I mean it is a place where you'd go on a weekend and people would be hanging out playing board games or playing corn hole or things of that nature. It really reminds me of the pubs, kind of the public house model in England where it really is a community gathering place. I think that's really something the taprooms have filled in [town] that perhaps we didn't even know that we needed.

Taylor, a business director, said:

I think everyone is very glad to have them. It's one of those, it's about time, kind of things and we're very glad to have them. It's just something to be proud of. Overall, it's definitely been a positive experience. They really add a lot to the community.

Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

When you're going to like a small craft brewery, you're supporting someone local, which is really important to me. Um, just knowing that I'm supporting someone local and I know that I'm helping, you're helping local families, not a big company. Just like any other shopping local, eating local, it's all really important. So, your money is all staying

here local. So, it's better for the economy if you're spending money at a local brewery versus another brewery, if that's how you spend your money.

***The more breweries the merrier***

Participants expressed the belief that the brewery boom in Oklahoma has been a good addition for communities and having more than one brewery in their communities was or could be a good thing. Shawn, an apparel business owner, said, “The laws changed to benefit a brewery and we saw, what happened as of 2016 off the top of my head, I think Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and in rural areas, I think there's probably been 30 breweries open.” Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said:

They're so unique in their own way. So, even though a lot of communities are now getting breweries, it's cool how they're all different. You know, their atmosphere is different. Obviously, their beers are different because they're creating them or brewing them and formulating them. So even though more places are getting a brewery, it just makes you want to go to more of them because it's fun to see the difference and to taste the difference. So, it's just, it's been really nice.

Uriah, an economic development project manager, said:

I'd be in the camp that we could use more than one brewery. Competition always makes them both better. You know, rising tide raises all ships. I think we could benefit from that. Um, I think the community is big enough. I think we've got enough of that culture and atmosphere built to withstand a second or even third. I mean there's five or six in the same block in Oklahoma City, which is a different sized community, but if you think on a small scale, I mean, what you [local bus.] do is you'll [local business] share, you share a tap and you [customer] go in and they say “hey, this is so and so's tap, after this you [customer] should pop over. They've got a really cool taproom.” And then they [brewery] say the same thing about your event or “hey did you hear that [another local brewery] is doing the [event] IPA, you should go grab it. It's really cool.” You know, it's like sharing

that culture. I think the more people that are going into our brewery or a potential other brewery is less people going to grab a Bud Light, you know, or a six pack of Coors on the way home. It's more people drinking quality beer and they will continue to do both. More breweries give more variety, and more opportunity to do that.

### ***Communities have embraced the breweries***

Participants mentioned community members have embraced the breweries. Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said, “The community has been really supportive. When the first brewery opened, there was about a hundred-foot-long line of people waiting for them to open their doors. The line went all the way down the block.” Olivia, a marketing director, said, “It's been received really well and a lot of people are excited to go out on, you know, Thursday nights or whatever and head to [local brewery] and see what they have.” Ryan, a journalist, said. “People really kind of love them for what they are and what they've meant to [town]. I've heard compliments about every single one of them in various contexts.”

Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

I think people really embrace it. I think a lot of people really like it. Um, I know there are people who don't like fancy beers or something like that, but I feel like the craft beer culture has really exploded in Oklahoma. I think communities on the whole are embracing it a lot. I see more and more restaurants having local options, which is wonderful. That's really been another culture shift that people have really rallied around. I think a lot of people really enjoy having them. The breweries have a good variety of things and activities to do and host a lot of events.

Natalie, a sales director, said:

I've noticed they've really embraced it. It's just something different we can add to our things to do in [town]. We get compliments all the time. They [brewery personnel] really get involved in the community and try to bring different things into [town]. So, they are, they're very good community supporters and people just love what they have to offer.

Michaela, an executive director, said:

I think everybody's been thrilled to have a new location to hang out. The fact that ours is set up to where you can bring in families and kids has aided its success and popularity because families can go hang out. But overall people have been real proud to be able to say they have a brewery in [town], particularly one of the type that we have.

Walker, a business development director, said:

A lot of times there is a moral issue but I think what we have seen in our business and in business development throughout the state, are communities becoming more and more relaxed in terms of how they feel about microbreweries simply because of the age group they attract and what they can offer the business sector. When you draw the bottom line of any rural town, it's migration and a proactive targeted method of trying to keep those individuals in their town is simply embracing microbreweries.

### **RQ3: How do community members believe brewery personnel engage and interact with the community?**

To understand how community stakeholders perceived the brewery personnel to engage and interact within the community participants were asked questions about community engagements, what events the breweries are involved in, what community events the brewery promotes, if the brewery personnel participate in charity events, and if brewery personnel were on community boards. The following themes emerged from interview responses: brewery personnel engage in the community, brewery personnel partner with local businesses and community, brewery personnel give back, and breweries create community amongst each other.

#### ***Brewery personnel engage in the community***

Participants said brewery personnel interact within the community by participating in community events and hosting events. Michaela, an executive director, said, "They have a big focus on doing events and entertainment within the brewery to bring people out to play games together, to sing together, to listen to music together. They're sponsoring activities in the



community that bring people out.” Veronica, CEO of a local business, said, “Anytime I've asked them for some help to help promote [town], they've provided me even product sometimes to help at a silent auction or whatever. But I think they get involved as much as they can.” Walker, a business development director, said:

They sponsor fundraising and nonprofit causes. They're willing to participate in terms of community activity. They're willing to sponsor fun runs, and 5k runs, and Saint Patrick's Day parade and anything else. You see them participate in various cultural events and music festivals, you see microbreweries right alongside the restaurant and entertainment venues.

***Brewery personnel partner with local businesses and community***

Participants mentioned brewery personnel being good partners with local businesses and the community. Uriah, an economic development project manager, said, “I think anytime they can get involved, they do. They get involved in our economic development by allowing us the opportunity to use their space to go in with clients and showcase our community and their beer.” Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said, “They partner with all kinds of organizations. I think they do all they can to foster those connections with everyone that they can. They'll join in on almost anything. they're invited to.” Natalie, a sales director, said, “They really get involved and into the community and try to bring different things into [town]. So, they are, they're very good community supporters and people just love what they have to offer.” Shawn, an apparel business owner, said:

There's a lot of breweries trying to give back, you know what I mean? It's kinda how I believe businesses should work. It's a relationship, you know; they're not out just to get your money. Sure, they have to pay bills and things like that, but they also want and give back and do what they can to help the community thrive, which in turn helps them.

Olivia, a marketing director, said:

They have a lot of community events. Live music is something that's really important to [town] and they really embrace that aspect of it. They have different artists and things like that come in. They've got a good partnership with [local businesses] and they're trying to kind of help out other people in the community as well and push [local businesses] as well and not just themselves. I think that shows a lot for their community involvement and how they feel about [town] and how they want to see it continue to grow.

Ryan, a journalist, said in reference to a past position:

We were kind of a neighborhood revitalization group and anytime we needed to have beer at an event they were always willing to bend over backwards and vend beer at our events in ways that were very easy for our customers. They've always been very generous to any of the community building events we've had, and they've hosted lots of fun things. They've had maker's fairs [craft fairs], they had all kinds of events. It's in light of self-interest. They want to create that foot traffic to come into their brewery, but they've also done so in ways that are kind of meaningful for the community and actually support other artists or other causes in town too. They've been good partners of the community in many ways, and I think that just speaks to who the brew masters and the employees and the ownership really are.

Ryan, a journalist, said:

Um, you know, from a business perspective, the response has been really positive. I mean, a lot of the other merchants that are in the area, certainly want to carry the local beers. They, uh, partner with them on a lot of cross promotion and other events and, um, the breweries have been good to respond in kind, I mean to work with, you know, the local, um, t-shirt screening operations or you know, when we want to do like a mashup stout that has coffee, they're working with the local coffee roaster or there's a number of different ways where that has benefited each other.

Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

They host a lot of events, just kind of a fun things, pop up shops, pottery making things, just a variety of things, which is really fun. I just think that the breweries are great about partnering with other local businesses and each other.

Uriah, an economic development project manager, said:

We get companies that are interested in our community. They come into town and um, as part of that we have to, you know, kind of woo them with the community. So, we really lean on our partners, various partners, but just quality of life partners like um, [local brewery] where we kind of, we'll take a six-pack with us to the site visit, give everyone at the table a can of beer and a hat or a bottle opener and tell them where it came from.

### ***Brewery personnel give back***

Participants mentioned breweries giving back to the community, hosting give-back nights, and engaging in charity events. Ryan, a journalist, said, "I know that other folks with the breweries [have] done things that have been more community minded as well, charitable fundraising campaigns and things too." Veronica, CEO of a local business, said, "They're very, they're very active. They have been active in, in different charity events." Shawn, an apparel business owner, said, "For a good cause the breweries are all open ears as long as they can do it, you know." Shawn, also said:

Uh, companies, businesses, nonprofits, organizations are hosting events at breweries um, because they know they'll get a good draw. Um, it's really become, I mean, it's great for the beer drinker, but I also think that it's really good for just the average person, whether you're in a nonprofit, a for profit, whatever. I feel like all these [organizations] are using breweries for hosting events because they actually get more turnout and things like that when they do it at a brewery because there's incentive and, you know, people have a beer and cut loose a little bit or whatever. But, um, I think it's really helped a lot of people. Um, I think it's brought a lot of people together. I dunno, I just, I think it's a good thing.

### ***Breweries create community amongst each other***

Participants made comments regarding the collaboration and collaborative effort brewery personnel make to work with and help the other breweries in their communities. Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said, “I mean, they're very friendly toward each other. I don't want it to sound like anything different, but sometimes you can have almost a dueling, you know, the dueling beers and the dueling breweries and they don't duel.”

Ryan a journalist, said:

I feel like there's a real comradery among most of the owners, um, to make sure that they are supporting each other. Getting more people to drink craft beer in general is going to create a bigger pie for them to share, but also to not ruin a good thing just out of, you know, pure reckless momentum. I think the spirit of cooperation among the brewery owners and then also just how socially responsible that they've been are two things that are kind of worth noting.

Ryan also said:

When [local brewery] was getting ready to open, um, it was like the week they were going to try to open it, and they were working on their miller, which, is the machine that grinds the grain, etc. and it wasn't working. So [local brewer] literally walked down the block or a block and half away and spent a couple of hours working on their milling machine. [He/She] realized the wiring was wrong and [local brewer] got it working for them. It's like this is technically a competitor getting ready to open a block and a half away and [local brewer] gave up two hours of [his/her] time to make sure that the miller was working, because if the milling machine isn't working, you can't make beer. So yeah, I think that says a lot ... I think they all want each other to do well cause again, it's more about growing the pie at this point. You know, [local brewer] always said, as long as we can convince one person to stop drinking Coors Light and drink real beer we all win at that point cause then they'll try mine, and his, and hers, and they'll try everybody's beers

eventually. So, I think that's been really kind of fun to see. You know, I think other industries aren't quite the same way.

Shawn, an apparel business owner, said:

It's just really fun to see the collaborative effort that's happening because, like I said before, I know they're all competitors, but there seems to be a real collaborative spirit and a lot of them are okay with working together. And even if it's with like another organization and two other breweries or something like that, they're finding a way to meet middle ground. And a common good comes out of it.

**RQ4: What role do community members see the breweries having within their community?**

To understand the role community stakeholders perceived the brewery to have within the community, participants were asked questions about how the breweries differed from other establishments. Participants were asked if they had heard of the third space concept, which was defined and if they thought breweries were a third space for community members. The following themes emerged from interview responses: Breweries give communities cool credibility, breweries are a vital element to a community's economy, breweries provide a third space for community members, and breweries attract tourists and open communities to a different demographic.

***Breweries give communities cool credibility***

Participants described having a brewery in their community as a measure of the type of community their town is. Uriah, an economic development project manager, said, "I think they're a true test of what kind of community you have. If you have a brewery, you're in a different subset or different category of community than if you don't." Veronica, CEO of a local business, said, "I believe that a brewery makes you look a little bit more progressive. I think it did add some credibility to our, not just our nightlife, but to just different things that people can go enjoy." Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said, "I know a lot of places are getting breweries and in one way, I mean it's exciting. It's so exciting to finally get

some here. It's like a huge milestone that the town got to get past it." Taylor, an executive director said:

It also changes their perception of [town], which is very important. It shows it's more of a hip place; it's happening. There's a lot of stuff going on, a younger demographic, and it works to help us fill that need and to change that perception.

***Breweries are a vital element to a community's economy.***

Participants described a brewery as a vital element to their community's economy by providing a quality of life business and contributing to the sense of place a community has.

Before Michaela was asked if she thought breweries were a third space for community members she said:

It's a very essential piece of our economy. While they may not provide the high paying jobs with huge benefits, the part of the economy they fill is providing what's referred to now as a third place for people to hang out besides home and work and build relationships, and it helps contribute to the sense of place for our community, which is a draw for people who want to live here. It's a quality of life piece, and everybody's in a fight for talent right now to fill the jobs we have available. So, the other piece, besides just making sure your community has plenty of jobs, you've got to make sure you've got plenty of people to fill those jobs and having places like a brewery helps provide a quality of life that brings people to town, that want to live and stay and continue to live here. So, it's a big piece of what's important in a having a great place to live.

Walker, a business development director, said:

I think they're vital. They have become a vital integral element of economic commerce, of not only our metros but rural areas and the state ... they've become an integral part of how a state and a community must appeal to commerce in order to make it work.

Walker mentioned one criterion he has seen for a site selection was the number of microbreweries in a particular area.

We relocated a company in [downtown] and they stood up at their announcement and said, “We drew a circle all the way around [area], and we had more microbreweries in [area] than any other town they had visited looking for a site.” I was just flabbergasted. First of all, that we had that many and secondly, that this company used that as a site-location criterion for how they were going to select their next business location. We inquired with them a little bit more, and they told us it’s just a technique they use because breweries attract the age group they’re looking to recruit. They sometimes go into these breweries and start recruiting from the table.

Uriah, an economic development project manager, said:

We’ll take either the site selectors or if the client’s in town over the brewery just to have a glass. A lot of what we do is relationship building and business development, more relationships than um, anything else. So, we get people to town; we take them to the cool places we have, the [local restaurant,] the breweries, the things like that to kind of showcase our community.

### ***Breweries provide a third space for community members***

When participants were asked if breweries created a third space atmosphere for community members, they indicated breweries are welcoming, family-friendly environments where people gather and get together. Ryan, a journalist, said he believed breweries were welcoming businesses and gathering spots, which is related to the third space concept before the concept was mentioned in the interview guide. He said, “The breweries really seem to be very welcoming to all.” He also said:

It’s kind of like coffee shops or that gathering spot. I think they really kind of filled a gap where people can just kind of go, and you almost feel like you’re hanging out with friends. It’s kind of like the living room or the backyard you always wished you had, you know, it’s kind of that feeling. They definitely have established a culture that’s really been a third place for people to gather.

Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

For people who do enjoy beer, it definitely provides that third space, that community space to get together with friends and family or by yourself and then meet new people. It's a great time to just like chat out someone else who's sitting by themselves. Um, and actually [local brewery] did a Thanksgiving party and so it was a potluck party. They said, 'We're making this, this and this, bring a side dish and come.' So, people who had family out of town or don't have family you know, around or, they had a place to go for Thanksgiving, like a community place to go and drink beer and eat food and get together.

Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said:

It kind of goes with being a place to just be, being a comfortable place to meet people and hang out and a place you're comfortable enjoying time besides home or work. I think they both are fulfilling a third-place need. Like, it's a place people want to hang out.

Shawn, an apparel business owner, mentioned breweries being a place where people get together prior to being asked about the third space concept. He said:

I feel like breweries are kind of like a popular restaurant where you may be going to get dinner, but really what you're doing is getting family, friends, or whatever together and you're just catching up. It's almost like it's a social gathering. I think it's just connecting people.

Shawn mentioned breweries being a third office for himself and other community members, "I think it is just in general, most taprooms are like public spaces, you know, I mean I work in them from time to time. I see other people working them. So, it also functions as a workplace." Walker, a business development director, said "Today's workforce use breweries to connect and be entertained. They collaborate with open ideas. They congregate to share their ideas there." Walker also said:

Teleworking has spurred an interest in microbreweries because their customers not only to come in and have a drink, but they can set up their office space there and work. This is



not only happening in Oklahoma, but all over the country, where breweries are allowing their customers to come in and to do stuff like that. Frankly, I see microbreweries as being a cog in the bigger wheel of this whole thing starting from teleworking from home. They have quiet, little cubbyholes where people are sitting and talking and having a beer and doing the work of all things. The whole contract is quite amazing for one thing.

***Breweries attract tourists and open communities to a different demographic***

Participants mentioned breweries being a business that attracts tourist and opens communities to different demographics. Taylor, an executive director, said, “I think it has opened it up to a different demographic and I'm very, very glad of that.” Shawn, an apparel business owner, said:

A lot of people want to know where the closest local brewery is, you know, and so now you're getting out of towners to come and kind of getting to experience our beers and things like that. And, um, I just think it's really good for everyone.

Veronica, CEO of a local business, said:

I've been wanting a brewery in town my whole career with [local business], just knowing for a fact that different communities have you know, beer trails and ale trails and uh, it's just something else, not only for the residents to enjoy, but it's something that will attract visitors into [town]. When they built, there wasn't a whole lot, maybe in the metros but not in communities our size. So, I was super, super excited about it and just the owners' ties to [local organization] I think has a great appeal. It's also something residents enjoy as well as a quality of life thing that we're super excited about it. I mean, it's just something that, to have an amenity, to be able to sell to visitors as an attraction is great and beneficial to us.

**RQ5: What do community members perceive as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities?**

To understand how community members gain awareness of breweries within their communities, participants were asked questions pertaining to their connection to the brewery within their community, and how they first knew about the breweries in their communities. Participants were asked how they thought other community members heard about the brewery, and what branding efforts they saw the brewery personnel utilize. The following themes emerged from participants' responses: brewery events attract customers, product distribution helps create brand awareness, word of mouth is a major factor, and unique branding, "swag," and place branding creates brand recognition.

***Brewery events attract customers***

Interview responses suggested events the brewery participated in or host help create awareness of the brewery. Natalie, a sales director, said, "They're good at hosting beer gardens at different events and having live music. They have live music just about every night of the week. So, that really helps get people in there who may not just wonder in." Veronica, CEO of a local business, said, "It's helpful for them to get live music because, obviously, the fanbase who follows that musician is going to go there. They have performers come in, that helps get the word out about the locations and promotes them." Walker, a business development director, said, "well, you know, just like wineries, they have tastings at local stuff." Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said, "I think events like the um, grubs and suds, uh, and other events that [neighborhood] hosts or the [neighborhood] district does tours ... events. I think that's really how."

***Product distribution helps create brand awareness***

Participants mentioned brewery distribution being a factor in creating brand awareness. Natalie, a sales director, said, "Um, having their beer just in stores around [town] or on tap around [town] I think is great for them." Penny, an executive director of a community development

organization, said, “[local brewery] is in grocery stores now and liquor stores, and [local brewery] is on tap. So, um, with that you'll also see them around, so they're able to spread the word that way.” Penny also said:

[Local brewer] has a really wide distribution and regionally I think [local brewer] is a name in craft beer, so people who like craft beer would know [local brewer]. You see [local brewer's] stuff in restaurants. Um, [local brewery] has done a lot of really good marketing since the law changed and grocery stores could have beer. They've really been pushing the distribution side of things and really been like putting their name out there.

Uriah, an economic development project manager, said:

I think the restaurants in town do a good job of having a local tap and always having the ability for someone to try the local beer, and I think their distribution helps. They're in the gas stations, they're in the convenience or the grocery stores, they're in Kansas. So, I think that plays a factor as well. Um, you know, their advertising, if you will, within other places with their taps or just with their shelf space.

### ***Word-of-mouth is a major factor***

Interview responses indicated participants felt word-of-mouth was a major factor in community members being aware of local breweries. Shawn, an apparel business owner, said breweries gain customer awareness by “largely word-of-mouth and social media. Um, they don't, none of them, do a whole lot of advertising. Um, I don't think they really need to.” Veronica, CEO of a local business, said, “I think people do a pretty good job of telling others about it. And the activities that [local brewery] hosts help a lot.” Olivia, a marketing director, said: “I think a lot of it is word-of-mouth. That's something people take for granted. Word-of-mouth is a huge deal for any business, especially for [local brewery,] Word-of-mouth is the biggest push they could give.” Penny, an executive director of a community development organization, said:

I think word-of-mouth and events is really how. I mean, I will say the people who like good craft beer, like to talk about how much they like good craft beer with other people who like the craft beer. So, word-of-mouth works really well.

***Unique branding, “swag,” and place branding creates brand recognition***

Participants mentioned breweries having unique logos, designs, and names of products, which usually has a local tie. Shawn, an apparel business owner, said, “I think all of them have their own unique kind of spin on it and how they want their brand to be perceived by the, by the public.” Veronica, CEO of a local Business, said, “They did t-shirts, which helps with their brand awareness. Also, more and more people like to buy [beer name]. I think it's a pretty popular Christmas gift and stocking stuffer because it's local and with the name of it” Quincy, a former director of a community development organization, said, “Their beers are named after things that are local or regional.” Uriah, an economic development project manager, said, “I think they do a pretty good job of branding. Some of their artwork can be really cool. They keep some things really simple and then use something super unique to grab your attention on the shelf.” Uriah also said:

A lot of their beers can be local. Um, [beer 1,] is a local name. The [beer 2] has a local connection. The [beer 3] is a local play on the community where we're at. So, a lot of their branding and names really tie back into where they are, which is really unique.

Michaela, an executive director, said:

They have quite a bit of, um, swag in the sense of glasses or t-shirts, and they are doing a different logo and design for each of their types of beer. So, that gives them opportunity to do creative things with each of those logos and promote them individually. They also name all of their beers off of something relevant in the community.

Olivia, a marketing director, said:

It's cool when you can go to a gas station and see [beer name] or you know, different kinds of brews, um, that are made in [town]. I think it's kind of fun when people know

that and they kind of see that aspect and you're not in [town] but you still kind of feel like you are in [town] because you have that connection. It kinda brings you back to that moment and brings you that back to that place. So, I think that's something that's really cool that the brewery does. It kind of transports you just by seeing it in different places. You kind of, you know, feel like you're back.

Olivia, also said:

I think they try to be different. They try to get really creative with things. Everything looks very uniform, you know, as far as like can designs and marketing and things like that. But it's all really different in its own aspect. So, I think that they play off of that a lot and I think that's a good thing, kind of a breath of fresh air for a different way to kind of market a product. I think with the [ beer name], it's so [town]. Anybody that's ever been to [town], you know what [ beer name] means it's just so recognizably [town.] I think taking that and naming a beer after that is genius because whether you liked the beer or not, you just see the can and think, Oh, that's [town] and that takes you back ... They were smart and strategic from the beginning of just making people feel a connection with their product and making people think of [town] and having that association. It also just helps bring in a little bit more of a community.

Ryan, a journalist, said:

The taproom decor really kind of sets the particular tone for what they [breweries] feel about themselves and their product. Then usually what you'll find is their packaging really tends to fit that particular model. I think they've done a good job of actually creating kind of like a lane for themselves and a brand and then it really reinforces everything from the way they decorate, the way their beers taste, their packaging, all that.

## **Conclusions & Implications**

### **RQ1: How has the brewery affected the community environment?**

The following themes were associated with this research question: breweries influence people to slow down and enjoy life, breweries enhance the existing culture, craft beer is viewed as a sociable drink, craft brewers promote social conscious awareness, and craft breweries have helped revitalize neighborhoods and vacant buildings. Participants mentioned breweries had enhanced the existing culture of the community by being a local and inclusive location that serves as a third space location for their community; Oldenburg (1999) suggested third space locations are places that unite the neighborhood. Behaviors can be branded as well as goods and services and findings indicated the craft brewery personnel represent their brand through socially responsible behaviors (Evens et al., 2002). Practicing socially responsible activities such as recycling spent grain and being environmentally sustainable, are important social and cultural behaviors that influence how consumers perceive craft breweries brands (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Craft breweries have influenced people to slow down and enjoy one another, which contributes to the social wellbeing of community residents as Smith and Marontate (2010) suggested. Craft breweries are important for place-making because craft breweries are a location where people meet and interact with one another. These are all factors Massey (1994) said contribute to place-making. Participants described beer as a sociable drink, which supports Mifsud's (2018) suggestions that getting together to drink a glass of beer plays a role in connecting communities. Findings from this study indicated participants felt craft breweries influenced residents to make connections and provided a reason for residents to want to live in a community. This finding supports Mifsud's (2018) suggestion that craft breweries add a quality of life aspect in a town or community. This study found consuming beer at a craft brewery influenced community members to make connections with other customers in the taproom and a

sense of belonging, which supports what Flack (1997) found relating to microbreweries use of neolocalism to create a sense of place.

**RQ2: How have community members reacted to brewery?**

The themes for this research question were community members see breweries as an asset for the community, the more breweries the merrier, and communities have embraced the breweries. Participants expressed their community had embraced the breweries. They described the breweries as an asset to their communities and the desire for more in their communities. Participants described breweries as an asset to their communities as a location where people have a sense of belonging, which also supports Flack's (1997) findings. Participants from this study said breweries are an asset to communities by filling a void. Participants suggested more breweries would be a good thing to provide more experiences for community members to try, because each brewery is unique. As Franzen and Moriarty (2009) mentioned, internal saliency is created through the personal experiences customers have with a business and participants indicated craft breweries create internal salience through their taproom experiences (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

**RQ3: How do community members believe brewery personnel engage and interact with the community?**

The themes from this research question were brewery personnel engage in the community, brewery personnel partner with local businesses and community, brewery personnel give back, and breweries create community amongst each other. When community members interact with each other, social capital is built (Scott, 2017) and findings from this study indicate craft breweries are venues where social capital is built. Participants suggested craft breweries provide opportunities for people to make connections due to the local nature of craft breweries and the community focus they have. These findings support Shortridge's (1996) ideals of neolocalism being a deliberate attempt to create a sense of place by forging relationship with local ties. Participants described craft breweries as community focused. Examples of craft

breweries community focus from this study were the charity events and local partnerships breweries have with local community business and organizations.

**RQ4: What role do community members see the breweries having within their community?**

The themes associated with this research question were breweries give communities cool cred, breweries are a vital element to a communities' economy, breweries provide a third space for community members, and breweries attract tourists and open communities to a different demographic. Participants said craft breweries attract tourists and open their communities to a different demographic, which contributes to a communities' economy as Smith and Marontate (2010) suggested. Participants said craft breweries are used as a site criterion when companies are looking for a location to open a business or to relocate. Results indicated craft breweries are used as a site location criterion because breweries create a sense of belonging, which supports Flack's (1997) suggestion that craft breweries evoke a sense of belonging. Another reason craft breweries are used as a site location criterion is because craft breweries provide something for residents to do as Mifsud (2018) mentioned. Participants also mentioned having a craft brewery as a true test of the kind of community they have.

Findings show craft breweries provide a welcoming place for community members to go, gather, and build connections. Welcoming locations where people gather and forge connections are third space locations (Oldenburg, 1999). Findings from this study show craft breweries are in a third place for community members. Participants suggested craft breweries provide venues where meaningful connections are made and are essential to the community, which supports Oldenburg's (1999) suggestions. Participants suggested craft breweries are an essential element for communities because they provide a quality of life aspect for their communities and they create a unique social value for communities as a presence of a third space location as Mifsud (2018) suggested.

A potential limitation of this study is participants might have been primed to believe breweries are a third space location for community members. That said, three participants called



craft breweries third space locations before the concept was mentioned, but these participants were the only participants aware of the third space concept prior to being asked. Other participants mentioned factors relating to the third space concept before they were asked if they believed craft breweries served as a third space location for their communities.

**RQ5: What do community members perceive as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities?**

In summarizing what community stakeholders perceive as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities, participants described ideas relating to differentiation, saliency, place branding, and neolocalism. The themes that emerged from this research question were brewery events attract customers, product distribution helps create brand awareness, word of mouth is a major factor, and unique branding, “swag,” and place branding creates brand recognition. Craft breweries use differentiation to set themselves apart from other breweries through their branding as Franzen and Moriarty (2009) mentioned. Findings from this study show craft breweries host and participate in community events to build trust and connect with community residents, which supports Notte’s (2016) suggestions for successful craft brewery branding. Participants described distribution as a way Oklahoma craft breweries increase their relevance and visibility, which ties back to brand saliency by being present in the surroundings of consumers (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). This study supports Schnell and Reese’s (2003, 2014) findings related to neolocalism and place brandings because participants indicated breweries use unique branding strategies and place branding to name their products and design their logos. Results showed participants noticed many Oklahoma craft breweries use early industries, town founders, town heritage, seasons and harvest cycles, and local heroes to name their products.

Upon examination of how community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities, it has been determined neolocalism and place branding is still a factor in craft brewery marketing as Hede and Wante (2013) described. Findings showed craft breweries

are not marketing to the masses, but they use events, local attachments, and social media platforms to research consumers, which supports McQuiston's (2013) suggestions. Participants indicated word-of-mouth as one of the biggest promotional factors of craft breweries. This finding related to Francioni and Byrd's (2012) ideas about craft brewery promotion. Findings from this research question indicate craft breweries play a key role in creating local place identities, which supported Tuan's (1991) findings.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

To understand how breweries shape a local sense of place, further research to learn about the local traditions would be valuable. This research provided insight into the process of place branding and neolocalism. Participants suggested breweries attract top talents to their communities by being a business that provides a quality of life aspect for community members. Further research to understand if craft breweries are a factor in why people chose to live in a community would be valuable. Also, with craft breweries rapidly developing a niche market in Oklahoma, it would be valuable to understand why Oklahoma consumers decide to visit a brewery.

Participants indicated a brewery in their community would increase tourism and having multiple breweries would lead to the community being a destination community. Further research to understand why consumers visit breweries would be beneficial for tourism organizations and brewery owners to develop product and marketing strategies. It would also be valuable to compare breweries across the country to gain a richer understanding of how community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities.

### **Practical Recommendations**

This study provides an understanding of what community members value from craft breweries and will be beneficial for brewery owners to use in creating their brand. This research revealed that being involved in the community helped consumers develop an attachment to the brewery. On this basis craft breweries should engage in community events with the goal of

promoting their brand. Word-of-mouth was described as the biggest factor consumers knew about craft breweries. Therefore, breweries should be aware of their taproom experience and should consider events as ways to increase their brand awareness.

This research provided a greater insight into the process of place branding and neolocalism. Participants indicated beers named after certain locations or community attributes helped develop an attachment to the beer. Oklahoma craft breweries should try to incorporate local ties in their beer names to forge an attachment and create a sense of place, especially with the beers they distribute in gas stations and grocery stores.

This research provided an insight on what companies look for in communities when they chose to open a business in a new location or relocate. Companies looking to attract top talent look for locations that have a nightlife or activities for their employees to do. City planners should consider breweries as community partners due to their role in creating activities for community members to take part in. Not only are craft breweries used as site location criterion, but this research showed they have aided community revival. City leaders should be aware of the increased property values and foot traffic craft breweries have influenced in their communities.

This study demonstrated community stakeholders believe craft breweries in Oklahoma serve as third space locations for consumers. Third space locations led to shared social capital. Participants indicated the craft brewery or breweries in their town filled a void they were not sure anyone knew needed to be filled. City leaders and craft brewery owners should be aware of the important role third space locations play in a community.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Conclusions & Discussion**

The Oklahoma craft brewery industry is relatively new, which means there is little academic research on Oklahoma craft breweries regarding their brand in a community. Studies have been conducted in other states examining craft breweries branding using neolocalism as a lens (Flack, 1997; Hede & Watne, 2013; Schnell & Reese, 2003). These studies have found neolocalism is widely expressed through beer names, logos, artwork, and other graphics in craft breweries (Flack, 1997; Hede & Watne, 2013; Schnell & Reese, 2003). The purpose of this two-manuscript study was to assess the brand of Oklahoma craft breweries within their communities. The first manuscript sought to understand how breweries establish their brand with respect to the communities they are in. The purpose of second manuscript was to understand how community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities. In the first study brewery participants were asked questions regarding their overall view of the brewery including what role they thought the brewery has within the community, what makes the brewery different than other local establishments, and if they believed the brewery served as a third space location for community members. Brewery participants were also asked if brewery products were named after local history, culture, or other local ties, and where the brewery sourced its supplies.

These questions were asked to gain an understanding of how breweries establish salience



with their respective community. The major themes for this research question included brewery personnel want to be a business the community is proud of, brewery personnel believe they can lead by example, brewery personnel contribute to community cultural revival, breweries function as a community gathering place or neighborhood living room, and breweries sell an experience as well as beer.

Brewery participants said the local culture of their community is something they wanted to positively impact and enhance in a meaningful way. This finding supports Fournier's (1998) idea of a brand relationship being related to the meaningful actions of the brand and its consumers mutual benefit. Brewery personnel mentioned they believed breweries were in a position to lead by example and help create a community by being a business that engages with the community and represents Oklahoma well. Findings showed these Oklahoma craft breweries focus on creating a place where people can connect, which relates to Tuan's (1991) suggestion that place is created when people get to know it better and associate value with a space or business. Brewery personnel findings indicated these craft breweries are establishments that benefit their local communities through local engagements and partnerships, which creates a sense of belonging like Schnell and Resse (2014) suggested. Brewery participants expressed the importance of responsibly contributing to community development in terms of culture revival and promoting the local economy. This study shows the Oklahoma craft breweries in this study invest in improving their communities.

There is a link between community revival and craft breweries, including increased property values. Brewery personnel mentioned meaningful social and cultural events as important to them and the mutual benefits of having a relationship with their community. This finding also tie to Fournier's (1998) suggestions of mutual benefit creating a brand relationship. Participants believed their success depended on the craft brewery community and their local communities. This finding also ties to Schnell and Reese's (2003) study, which indicated the success of craft breweries is strongly related to their desire to support their local community.

The craft breweries in Oklahoma in this study are closely connected to place. These Oklahoma craft breweries show a desire to reconnect with communities indicating the deliberate attempt to focus on place and the local economy, which represents the concept of neolocalism (Shortridge, 1996). Brewery participants said they wanted to make a local beer that represented the heritage of their community and was a product community members could have a sense of ownership in. Being a business community members could be proud of was an important factor to the participants in the first study. These findings show craft breweries foster a closeness with community member through creating a local product as Schnell and Reese's (2003) findings suggested.

To gain an understanding of how the brewery personnel differentiate the brewery and its products, brewery participants were asked questions regarding how they thought customers knew about the brewery and how they thought community members perceived their brand. The themes associated with this research question were word-of-mouth is a promotion factor, peer promotion promotes breweries, brewery events are used for promotion, and place branding is a branding technique for breweries. Most breweries in this study indicated the importance of being creative and innovative in both products and branding (McQuiston, 2013).

Brewery participants said being a craft brewery meant they were creative and innovative, all of which helps enhance the experiences of craft brewery customers. This finding relates to internal saliency, which is created through consumer usage and experience (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Brewery participants said they wanted to make innovated, high quality beers for consumers to enjoy. These breweries create differentiation through innovative products, which helps their businesses stand apart from competitors (Keller, 1998).

Brewery participants said other breweries play a major role in attracting customers to try their beer and visit their taprooms, which helps them expand their market and relates to Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital being social relations. Word-of-mouth was described one of the biggest factors of spreading the brand of the brewery along with engaging,

participating, and hosting event, which is important given that word-of-mouth recommendations are important for millennials (Granase, 2012; McCluskey & Shreay, 2011). Brewery personnel also mentioned using events, tastings, and local or region festivals to promote their products and reach consumers (Fountain et. al., 2008; Francioni & Byrd, 2012; McQuiston, 2013).

Community participants were asked what they perceived as the salient and differentiated aspects of breweries within their communities. Community stakeholder participants described ideas relating to differentiation, saliency, place branding, and neolocalism. The themes that emerged from this research question were brewery events attract customers, product distribution helps create brand awareness, word-of-mouth is a major factor, and unique branding, “swag,” and place branding creates brand recognition. Findings from the second study show craft breweries host and participant in community events to build trust and connect with community residents, which supports Notte’s (2016) suggestions for successful craft brewery branding.

Findings showed these craft breweries are not marketing to the masses, but they use events, local attachments, and social media platforms to reach consumers, which supports McQuiston’s (2013) suggestions. Community stakeholder participants also indicated word-of-mouth as one of the biggest promotional factors of craft breweries. This finding related to Francioni and Byrd’s (2012) ideas about craft brewery promotion and helped support the findings from the first study. Community stakeholders described product distribution as a way breweries increase their relevance and visibility, which ties back to brand saliency by being present in the surroundings of consumers (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Upon examination of how community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities, it has been determined neolocalism and place branding are still factors in craft brewery marketing as Hede and Wante (2013) described.

Community stakeholders noticed many Oklahoma craft breweries use early industries, town founders, town heritage, seasons and harvest cycles, and local heroes to name their products, which ties into Schnell and Reese’s (2014) findings. This study supports Schnell and

Reese's (2003, 2014) findings related to neolocalism and place brandings because participants indicated breweries use unique branding strategies and place branding to name their products and design their logos. Brewery personnel from this study said they intentionally use local ties to name some of their beers, especially their flagship beers. Brewery participants said they have used Oklahoma imagery in their can designs and logos, and they have drawn on the state's roots in agriculture to name a few of their beers. Results from both studies indicate many Oklahoma craft breweries use place branding such as early industries, town founders, town heritage, seasons and harvest cycles, and local heroes to name products. This finding shows Oklahoma craft breweries are using neolocalism to actively attempt to resurrect the feeling of community through building relationships and new connections with the places they are located as well as create a sense of place (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003, 2014).

Community stakeholder participants were asked their perception of the role craft breweries have within their community. The themes associated with this research question were breweries give communities cool credibility, breweries are a vital element to a communities' economy, breweries provide a third space for community members, and breweries attract tourists and open communities to a different demographic. Community stakeholder participants indicated breweries served as places for people in the community to connect with each other, which relates to Oldenburg's (1999) concept of third spaces being welcoming locations where people gather and forge connections.

Findings from the second study show these craft breweries are in a literal sense a third place for community members. Community stakeholder participants suggested craft breweries are an essential element for communities because they provide a quality of life aspect for their communities through being a venue where meaningful connections are made (Oldenburg 1999). They said craft breweries create a unique social value for communities as a presence of a third space location as Mifsud (2018) suggested.

When brewery participants were asked if they believed the brewery served as a third space for community members, they indicated the brewery serves as a neighborhood living room or community gathering place. This finding ties to Hickey's (2012) idea of third space being a living room for the society at large and Oldenburg's (1999) idea of third spaces being a local, inclusive, gathering spot. Brewery participants expressed the idea of wanting the taproom to be a community space where people can come and enjoy themselves with family, friends, or strangers.

Both studies indicated craft breweries serve as a third space for the communities they are in. A potential limitation of this study is participants might have been primed to believe breweries are a third space for community members. That said, three community stakeholder participants called craft breweries third space before the concept was mentioned, though these participants were the only community stakeholder participants aware of the third space concept prior to being asked. Only two brewery participants had heard of the third space concept. However, both subsets of participants mentioned factors relating to the third space concept before they were asked if they believed craft breweries served as a third space location.

Another role community stakeholder participants indicated craft breweries have is opening up their communities to different demographics and tourist. This finding shows breweries contribute to a community's economy as Smith and Marontate (2010) suggested. Community stakeholder participants said craft breweries are used as a site criterion when companies are looking for a location to open a business or to relocate. Results indicated craft breweries are used as a site location criterion because, like Flack (1997) suggested, breweries create a sense of belonging.

When community stakeholders were asked how they saw brewery personnel engaging and interacting within their community, results indicated community stakeholders saw aspects of social capital and neolocalism. The themes relating to this research question were brewery personnel engage in the community, brewery personnel partner with local businesses and community, brewery personal give back, and breweries create community amongst each other.

Community stakeholders suggested craft breweries provide opportunities for people to make connections due to the local nature of craft breweries and the community focus they have. These findings also support Shortridge's (1996) ideals of neolocalism being a deliberate attempt to create a sense of place by forging relationships with local ties.

Examples of craft breweries' community focus from the community stakeholders' perspectives were the charity events and local partnerships breweries have with local community business and organizations. These findings show Oklahoma craft breweries are a location where people can forge relationships and connections. When people interact with each other, social capital is built (Scott, 2017) and findings from this study indicates craft breweries are venues where social capital is built.

When brewery personnel were asked how they created, participated in, and interacted with community events representing the brewery, the themes for this research question were brewery personnel are civically engaged, brewery personnel are local minded and partners of the community, brewery personnel are socially responsible, and brewery personnel believe in leaving communities and neighborhoods better than they found it. Brewery participants said Oklahomans are true to their identity, and these breweries have made an effort to represent the identity of Oklahomans well. This finding relates to the idea of using local history, landscape, and culture to forge a local identity (Taylor et al., 2020). Brewery personnel participants emphasized being local minded as an important aspect of their business model.

Not only was being part of the community an important aspect for them but so was using local products and partnering with local artists and businesses. They suggested the success of their community would benefit their success as a brewery, which helps explain why the brewery personnel partner with other local businesses including other craft breweries. Oklahoma craft breweries have the opportunity as business owners to team together to improve their communities and shape practices. This finding relates to Said's (2019) suggestion that coopetition can shape practices such as community engagements. These findings suggest brewery participants believe in

the benefits of community involvement and cooperation (Said, 2019). This also ties back to Shortridge's (1996) concept of neolocalism, which is the conscious attempt to foster a relationship with local ties, supporting local economies, and reconnecting with places.

Often the Oklahoma craft brewery owners or employees from this study ingrain themselves in the community by serving on community boards or being members of community organizations. Being ingrained in the community helps the breweries build relationships and provides opportunities to help them make a difference in their community (Fournier, 1998). These Oklahoma craft breweries forge relationships with their communities and being civically involved is important because it leads to success for craft breweries (Gatrell et al., 2019). The Oklahoma craft breweries from this study participate in special releases, charity nights, and community events to promote their brands as McQuiston (2013) suggested to successfully promote craft breweries. The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study have immersed themselves in social responsibilities, which is important because values are the core of a culture (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Social responsibility emerged as a theme after brewery participants discussed the importance of customers enjoying their product responsibly and their responsibility of balancing revitalization with gentrification.

In summarizing how brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and the respective community, brewery participants indicated the craft breweries have been well received. Brewery personnel participants said the community members' responses to the brewery personal being engaged in community events have been positive. Brewery participants even said city leaders have thanked them for their contributions to the community. This shows these Oklahoma craft breweries have developed an attachment through their relationships and reputation as Fournier (1998) suggested. It is important for Oklahoma craft breweries to build brand loyalty with consumers and forging a relationship through connection to the local community helps foster brand loyalty (Taylor et al., 2020).

When community stakeholders were asked how they thought their community had reacted to craft breweries, the themes relating to this research question were community stakeholders see breweries as an asset for the community, the more breweries the merrier, and communities have embraced the breweries. Community stakeholder participants expressed their community had embraced the breweries. They described the breweries as an asset to their communities and the desire to have more. Community participants suggested having more breweries would be a good thing to provide more experiences for community members to try, because each brewery is unique. As Franzen and Moriarty (2009) mentioned, internal saliency is created through the customers' personal experiences with a business and participants indicated craft breweries create internal salience through their taproom experiences. Community stakeholder participants described breweries as an asset to their communities because the breweries serve as a location where people have a sense of belonging. This supports Flack's (1997) findings, and ties to the results from the first study. Community stakeholder participants said breweries are an asset to communities by filling a void.

Community stakeholders were also asked how they thought the brewery had affected their community environment. The following themes were associated with this research question: breweries influence people to slow down and enjoy life, breweries enhance the existing culture, craft beer is viewed as a sociable drink, craft brewers promote social conscious awareness, and craft breweries have helped revitalize neighborhoods and vacant buildings. Behaviors can be branded as well as goods and services, and findings indicated the craft brewery personnel represent their brand through socially responsible behaviors (Evens et al., 2002). Oklahoma craft breweries recycle their spent grain and try to source local product whenever possible. Being environmentally sustainable and practicing socially responsible activities such as recycling spent grain are social and cultural factors that are important for how consumers perceive craft brewery brands (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).



Community participants described beer as a sociable drink, which supports Mifsud's (2018) suggestions that getting together to drink a glass of beer plays a role in connecting communities. Findings from this study indicated community participants felt craft breweries influenced residents to make connections and provided a reason for residents to want to live in a community. This finding supports Mifsud's (2018) suggestion that craft breweries add a quality of life aspect in a town or community. Consuming beer at a craft brewery influences community members to make connections with other customers in the taproom and creates a sense of belonging as Flack (1997) found.

Community participants mentioned breweries had enhanced the existing culture of the community by being a local and inclusive. Community participants indicated breweries are locations where people get together. This means craft breweries are important for place-making because craft breweries are a location where people meet and interact with one another, which are factors Massey (1994) said contribute to place-making. Community participants said craft breweries have influenced people to slow down and enjoy one another, which contributes to the social wellbeing of community residents as Smith and Marontate (2010) suggested.

Brewery personnel participants were also asked how they perceived the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments. In summarizing how the brewery personnel perceive the relationship between the brewery and other local establishments including other craft breweries, an overarching characteristic of social capital (Scott, 2017) emerged through the five themes. The five themes associated with this research question were rising tides floats all boats, the competition between craft breweries and macro breweries resemble David vs. Goliath, brewers with more experience mentor new brewers, breweries borrow sugar from their neighbors, and interactions between Oklahoma breweries resembles friendship.

When brewery participants explained the competition between Oklahoma craft breweries, the idea of promoting craft first and the theme rising tides floats all boats emerged. These Oklahoma craft brewers seem to live by the motto, "rising tides floats all boats." This was a

common phrase repeated in several of the interviews, and it was mentioned in both subsets of participants. Brewery personnel expressed the belief that what was good for one brewery was good for all of the breweries in Oklahoma. They expressed the importance of building the craft culture by helping everyone raise their game to produce higher quality products and ensure the odds of more people drinking craft beer. These Oklahoma craft breweries know helping each other will help the entire industry by growing their consumer base and will help the craft beer industry in Oklahoma grow. This is important because Chen and Miller (2012) and Mathias et al., (2017) mentioned the more people drinking craft beer will legitimize the market and ensure a better market position. It appears Oklahoma craft breweries team together to compete against macro brewers such as MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch.

Brewery participants expressed the notion breweries benefitted from interactions with each other. The brewery personnel suggested other craft breweries were not their competition, and they suggested craft breweries were part of an industry community, which competes against macro-breweries instead of one another. Brewery participants recognized the mutual benefits of helping one another out, which ties to coopetition. Coopetition can ensure higher market quality products and can help increase market positions against the macro brewers who dominate the beer industry (Mathias et al., 2017). These findings all support the concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993; Scott, 2017).

The Oklahoma craft brewing industry represented is full of examples of breweries helping each other. The brewery personnel share knowledge and resources, and even promote each other's beer and taproom experiences, which supports the Flanagan et al. (2018) findings of craft breweries promoting other craft breweries to their customers. The industry in general promotes working together even as they compete for the same consumers. Oklahoma craft breweries support each other through collaborations and share helpful information, which helps ensure the success of the industry (Chen & Miller, 2012; Domínguez & Arford, 2010). Brewery personnel mentioned craft breweries with more experience have helped mentor them by

answering their questions, collaborating, and pointing them in the right direction (Marchak 2015; Said, 2019). The interactions between these Oklahoma craft breweries resembles a relationship, which is what Domínguez and Arford (2010) proposed was the fundamental aspect of social capital. The relationships between Oklahoma craft breweries resembles a friendship.

Brewery participants explained they will borrow ingredients from other craft breweries if they are low on certain ingredients on brew days. Sharing resources with other craft breweries, who could be seen as competition also demonstrates the theory of coopetition (Said, 2019). Participants explained they will exchange ingredients with other breweries, and order shipments together to save money on shipping costs. This kind of relationship ultimately helps the breweries succeed and represents Bourdieu's (1998) concept of social capital being a social relation that helps advance people or businesses.

This study demonstrated these Oklahoma craft breweries in communities exhibit third space characteristics. These characteristics include being a welcoming, local, inclusive location where people gather. The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study help create a quality of life aspect in their communities by being a venue where connections are made. This demonstrates these Oklahoma craft breweries are venues that lead to social capital. Social capital is present through the partnerships these Oklahoma breweries have with other local business, their communities, and other craft breweries. Branding shows up through local attachments, including neolocalism factors and place branding. The Oklahoma craft breweries in this study are not marketing to the masses; they promote themselves through community engagements and events. Word-of-mouth was attributed as the biggest factor of promotion, which makes events and engagements even more important.

### **Recommendations for Future Research & Practical Recommendations**

This research contributes to the understandings of how craft breweries establish their brand with respect to their communities and how these Oklahoma community stakeholders perceive the brand of craft breweries, but further research is needed. Oklahoma is a relatively new

craft brewery industry. It would be valuable to study other states that have more established brewery industries because findings may differ. Comparing breweries across the country to gain a richer understanding of how community stakeholders perceive the brand of breweries within their communities would be valuable as well.

This research also provided insight into the process of place branding and the neolocalism. Community stakeholders indicated beers named after certain locations or community aspects fostered an attachment to the beer and the brewery it comes from. Due to this finding, Oklahoma craft breweries should try to incorporate local ties in their beer names to forge an attachment and create a sense of place, especially with the beers they distribute in gas stations and grocery stores. Craft breweries are locally produced but their products can be distributed throughout the state and across state lines. Therefore, it would be valuable to gain consumer perspectives of craft beer once it is sold beyond its locality.

Findings from this study also revealed these Oklahoma craft brewers could forge an attachment to their community and can help consumers develop an attachment by being engaged in their community. On this basis, craft breweries should attempt to create and participate in community events with the goal of promoting their brand and creating an attachment. Breweries should also be aware of their taproom experience and should consider events as ways to increase their brand awareness because events lead to word-of-mouth promotion. Findings from this study indicated word-of-mouth was described as the biggest factor consumers knew about craft breweries. Therefore, further research is needed to understand what these events and taproom experiences should be like to help craft breweries develop events and an atmosphere that will lead to further success and to forge a greater attachment.

Partnering with other local businesses is a good way for breweries to engage in their communities, and craft breweries should recognize the difference they can make within their communities by partnering with other local businesses and breweries. This is important because the success of a craft brewery can be linked to the success of their community. Further research

could also explore how breweries have helped shape a sense of place. It would be valuable to learn about the local traditions in communities to understand how the breweries have shaped the local sense of place and vice versa. Research beyond craft breweries such as local food production or craft fairs where consumers are gravitating towards local movements may provide further insight into sense of place as a brand strategy too.

This research also provided further insight in how these Oklahoma craft breweries interact with one another. Craft breweries should recognize the mutual benefits of working together as an industry and how coopetition can increase their overall market share. Coopetition is seen as a temporary behavior that decreases as a market matures so it would also be valuable to study more developed craft beer industries in different states to see how those breweries interact with one another. Studying the craft brewery industry community would also be valuable to understand how the industry builds community with one another across state lines.

This research demonstrated the Oklahoma craft breweries in this study serve as a third space for consumers, which leads to social capital. This study demonstrated community stakeholders and brewery personnel both believe craft breweries in Oklahoma serve as third space locations for consumers. Community stakeholders indicated the craft brewery or breweries in their town filled a void they were not sure anyone knew needed to be filled. Therefore, city leaders and craft brewery owners should be aware of the important role third space locations play in a community. This study provides an understanding of what community stakeholders value from craft breweries and will be beneficial for brewery owners to use in creating their brand. Due to the current pandemic, further research to determine how COVID-19 affected Oklahoma craft breweries and the role they serve in the community would be valuable.

This study also demonstrated the craft breweries in Oklahoma from this study are an important venue where place is experienced and social capital is shared. Further exploration to understand social capital's application for other agricultural organizations in the broad scope of agriculture would be valuable. Social capital should be used as a framework for assessing other

agricultural businesses and organizations. Youth organization such as 4-H, FFA, and various rodeo organizations could be examined through a social capital lens to determine how the organizations and their members interact with one another.

This research also provided an insight on what companies look for in communities when they chose to open a location or relocate. Companies looking to attract top talent look for locations that have a nightlife or activities for their employees to engage in. City planners should consider breweries as community partners due to their role in creating activities for community members to take part in. Not only are craft breweries used as site location criterion, but this research showed they have led to community revival. City leaders should be aware of the increased property values and foot traffic craft breweries have influenced in their communities.

Findings from this study suggested breweries will attract a certain demographic to communities and can help retain top talent because they provide a quality of life factor for communities. Further research to understand if breweries are a factor in why people chose to live in a community or not would be valuable. Also, with craft breweries rapidly developing a niche market in Oklahoma, it would be valuable to understand why Oklahoma consumers decide to visit a brewery. Participants indicated a brewery in their community would increase tourism and having multiple breweries would lead to the community being a destination community. Further research to understand why consumers visit breweries would be beneficial for agritourism and tourism organizations. This information could help brewery owners develop product and marketing strategies.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – IRB Approval Letter



#### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 01/09/2020  
Application Number: AG-19-56  
Proposal Title: Local Brands of Breweries in Oklahoma

Principal Investigator: Cara Jolly  
Co-Investigator(s):  
Faculty Adviser: Quisto Settle  
Project Coordinator:  
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt  
Exempt Category:

#### Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

**This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.**

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,  
Oklahoma State University IRB

## Appendix B – Brewery Interviewer’s Guide

### Introduction

Hello, my name is Cara Jolly, and I received your information from \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. I am working on a study being conducted through Oklahoma State University’s Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership regarding the brewery’s place in the community and the community’s perceptions of the brewery.

Your identity and responses will be kept confidential.

There aren’t any expected risks to participate in this study, and there will be no cost to you to participate in this study.

Please sign a consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this study?

1. Can you tell me about your brewery?

- When did the brewery open?
- How has the community reacted to the brewery?
- Have you heard any compliments?
  - i. Complaints?
- Have cultural beliefs in the community caused any pushback?

2. Tell me more about the history of the brewery.

- Why did the brewery open (you can say “you” if you’re interviewing the owner(s))?
- Where did the brewery begin?
- Why was this location chosen?

3. What would you say the goals for the future are?

4. How is your brewery different from other local breweries (or other similar establishments like taphouses, if no other breweries)?

- Who do you see as your competitors?
- How do you interact with other breweries?
- Do you think interactions will change over time?

5. In general, what is your overall view of the brewery?

6. Where does the brewery source it’s supplies?

- How do you choose your suppliers?
- Does the brewery try to use local products whenever possible?

7. How does the brewery promote itself?
  - Advertising
  - Branding? Name of beers?
  - Social media, etc.
8. Does the brewery partake in community engagements?
  - What role in the community does the brewery have?
  - What kind of community events does the brewery engage in?
    - i. Why/why not?
  - Does the brewery partake in charity events?
  - What's been the response to community engagement?
  - How has the community responded to the brewery being part of community events?
  - Are the brewery owners involved on community boards?
9. There is a concept called the third space.
  - Explain the concept.

Do you see the brewery as a third space?

**Conclusion:**

Is there anything we haven't talked about, you think is important to know?

Who are other breweries or community members that you recommend I visit with?

*Summarize the points talked about in the interview.*

Is this an accurate summary of our discussion today? Do you have anything to add or something you would like clarified?

Thank you very much for your time.

## Appendix C – Community Interviewer’s Guide

### Introduction

Hello, my name is Cara Jolly, and I received your information from \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. I am working on a study being conducted through Oklahoma State University’s Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership regarding the brewery’s place in the community and the community’s perceptions of the brewery.

Your identity and responses will be kept confidential.

There aren’t any expected risks to participate in this study, and there will be no cost to you to participate in this study.

Please sign a consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this study?

1.) Would you tell me about your connection to the brewery?

- How did you first hear about the brewery?

2.) Can you tell me a little about your town?

- Can you tell me about the culture?
- How is it unique to other towns in the area?

1) How long has/have the brewery(s) been in town?

- How has the community reacted to the brewery (s)?
- Do you think the breweries have changed the culture of the community?
- Have you heard any compliments?

i. Complaints

- Have any community members’ cultural beliefs caused any pushback?

2) Do the breweries engage with the community, if so how?

- Is the brewery involved in community events?
- Is the brewery promoting community events?
- Does the brewery participate in charity events?
- Are the owners involved on community boards- City council members?

3) In general, what is your overall view of the brewery(s)?

4) How do you think the brewery is different from other establishments in the community?

5) How do you think other community members hear about the brewery?



- Branding
- Advertising
- Social media, etc.

6) There is a concept called the third space.

- Explain the concept

Do you see the breweries being a third space?

**Conclusion:**

Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think is important to know?

Who are other breweries or community members that you recommend I visit with?

*Summarize the points talked about in the interview.*

Is this an accurate summary of our discussion today? Do you have anything to add or something you would like clarified?

Thank you very much for your time.

## Appendix D – Informed Consent



### Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership

## Participant Consent FORM

### Branding of Local Breweries in Oklahoma

#### **Key Information**

Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore place branding of Oklahoma Breweries and the community perceptions of the breweries.

Major Procedures of the Study: Participants will participate in in-person and/or phone interviews

Duration of Participation: 1 hour

Significant Risks: None

Potential Benefits: More cohesive relationships between breweries and local communities.

Compensation: None

#### **Background Information**

You are invited to be in a research study involving branding of Oklahoma breweries and community perceptions. You were selected as a possible participant because you are involved with an Oklahoma brewery. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

**This study is being conducted by:** Cara Jolly, Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership, under the direction of Quisto Settle, Department of Agricultural Education Communications and Leadership.

#### **Procedures**

**If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:** participate in an interview to answer questions related to your perceptions of a local brewery and allow audio taping of your interview with the researcher.

**Participation in the study involves the following time commitment:** an hour

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study**

There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

There are no direct benefits to you. More broadly, this study may help the researchers learn more about place branding and perceptions of breweries and community involvement.

#### **Compensation**

You will receive no payment for participating in this study.

#### **Confidentiality**

The information you give in the study will be stored anonymously. This means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data in any way. Only the researchers will know that you have participated in the study. The researchers will not be able to remove your data from the dataset once your participation is complete.

We will collect your information through in-person interviews and/or phone interviews. This study involves the audio taping of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audiotape or the transcript. This information will be stored on a password protected computer. This informed consent form will be kept for three years after the study is complete, and then it will be destroyed. Your data collected as part of this research project, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study**



Approved: 01/09/2020  
Protocol #: AG-19-56

**Appendix E - Recruitment Email**

Sending email address: [Cara.jolly@okstate.edu](mailto:Cara.jolly@okstate.edu)

Subject: Brewery Branding Research

Hello,

My name is Cara Jolly; I am an agricultural communications graduate student at Oklahoma State University. I am researching branding aspects and community perceptions of breweries.

My main focus is a brewery's place and involvement in their respective communities. I plan to conduct in-person interviews with brewery personnel as well as influential brewery community members throughout Oklahoma.

Would Brewery Name/community member name be interested in being part of this research?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cara

## VITA

Cara Elizabeth Jolly

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL: THE ROLE OKLAHOMA CRAFT BREWERIES  
PLAY IN COMMUNITIES

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2020.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, in 2018.

Completed the requirement for the Associates of Arts Degree with an emphasis in business and Associates of General Studies with an emphasis in agribusiness at Northeastern Junior College, Sterling, Colorado in 2016.

Experience:

Specialty Risk Insurance, marketing assistant, June 2019 – August 2019  
H2 Enterprises, administration assistant and marketing/business development,  
June 2018 – August 2019

Facilitated agricultural issue discussions with producers in focus groups,  
February 2020 – March 2020